The Times

INDIAN REPORT SUPPLEMENT

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SUMMARY

The Indian Statutory Commission was appointed by Royal Warrant on November 26, 1927. Its members are:—

The Right Hon. Sir John Simon, K.C.V.O., M.P. (Chairman).
The Viscount Burnham, G.C.M.G., C.H.
The Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal.
The Hon. E. C. G. Cadogan, C.B., M.P.
The Right Hon. Vernon Hartshorn, M.P.
Colonel the Right Hon. G. R. Lane Fox, M.P.
Major C. R. Attlee, M.P.

The first part of the Report of the Commission, which appears to-day as Volume I., surveys the existing conditions in India. The terms of reference and the procedure followed by the Commission in its inquiry are first explained. In an Introduction Mr. Montagu's declaration of British policy in the House of Commons in August, 1917—the pronouncement which "supplies the governing conditions" for all schemes for India—is set out. In that declaration the policy of the British Government was laid down as the "gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire."

The rest of Volume I. is divided into seven parts, as follows:—

PART I.—The Conditions of the Problem

This Part provides "in a compendious form a statement, as accurate and impartial as we [the Commissioners] can make it, of what India is—its vast size and varied population, its conglomeration of races and religions, its social divisions, its economic circumstances, and its growing political consciousness." To this statement is added an account of the Indian States and of the Army in India, subjects which "exercise so great an influence on the Indian problem as a whole and are so vitally involved in its future treatment."

PART II.—The Existing Constitutional Structure

In this section the essentials of the earlier Reforms are described, the principles of the Reforms of 1919 are stated and the system set up in that year is explained.

PART III.—Working of Reformed Constitution

The purpose of this section is explained by its title. It gives an account of the political developments since 1920, with a description of the non-cooperation movement and some notes on the Indian Press.

PART IV.—The Administrative and Judicial System

This Part includes an account of the functions and organization of the various administrative services as well as of various provincial services. It also includes a description and criticism of local self-government and an account of the minor administrations, especially of the North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan.

PART V.—The System of Public Finance

This gives an account of the fiscal system as it is, both in the Provinces and at the Centre, with a description of the nature and results of the "Meston Settlement."

PART VI.—The Growth of Education in British India

The Commission explains that it is primarily concerned with education and its organization in relation to political and constitutional conditions and potentialities of progress.

PART VII.—Public Opinion in India

In this Part the Commissioners briefly indicate their view of the extent of political consciousness in India and give an estimate of the forces at work in Indian public life. The volume also contains three maps.

MEMORANDA

The following appendices to the Statutory Commissioners' Report are issued by H.M. Stationery Office:—

Memoranda submitted by the Government of India and the India Office to the Commission. Part I., price 9s.; Part II., price 11s.)
Memorandum submitted by the Government of Bengal. (Price 6s. 6d.)
Memorandum submitted by the Government of the United Provinces. (Price 7s.)
Memorandum submitted by the Government of Bihar and Orissa. (Price 4s.)
Memorandum submitted by the Government of Assam. (Price 6s. 6d.)
Memorandum submitted by the Government of Bombay. (Price 7s. 6d.)
Memorandum submitted by the Government of Burma. (Price 7s.)
Memorandum submitted by the Government of the Punjab. (Price 8s. 6d.)

VOLUME I.—THE PROBLEM SURVEYED

After an inquiry lasting two and a half years, the Indian Statutory Commission, on which all three political parties are represented, has submitted a unanimous report. "Our Report," say the Commissioners in their submission to the King, "is unanimous on all fundamental matters, and will be found to be without dissenting minute."

The Commission was appointed under the Government of India Act, 1919, to inquire into the working of the system of government, the growth of education, and the development of representative institutions in British India, and matters connected therewith, and to report as to whether and to what extent it is desirable to establish the principle of responsible government, or to extend, modify, or restrict the degree of responsible government existing therein, including the question whether the establishment of Second Chambers of the local Legislatures is or is not desirable.

TWO VOLUMES

The Report is in two volumes. Volume I., issued to-day as a Blue-book (Cmd. 3568. Price 3s.), deals with the first part of the Commission's terms of reference. It is entitled "Survey," and is in seven parts, occupying over 400 pages. It discusses the conditions of the problem, the existing constitutional structure, the working of the reformed constitution, the administrative and judicial system, the system of public finance, the growth of education in British India, and public opinion in India. The second volume, dealing with future developments, will present the Commission's conclusions and recommendations. It will be published on June 24.

The reason for issuing Volume I. a short time in advance of Volume II. is given in the Report, which says:—

> The problems connected with the future constitutional development of India are of such complexity and importance that we are unwilling to see our proposals for their treatment thrown into the arena of discussion and controversy before there has been time to examine and digest the survey of the present position on which our recommendations are based, and in the light of which we believe them to be justified. If the account we have given in Volume I. is just and fair, we believe that our recommendations in Volume II. will be found to be wise and necessary. . . . In handling matters so various and so vital, it appears to us to be absolutely necessary first to establish the greatest possible measure of agreement as to the fundamentals of the Indian problem, before hastening to consider the method, the pace and the direction of the advance that can now be made along the road to its ultimate solution.

THE PROCEDURE FOLLOWED

The Commissioners paid two visits to India, the first lasting from February 3, 1928, until March 31, 1928, and the second from October 11, 1928, until April 13, 1929. Their first task upon their arrival in India was to formulate the procedure to be followed in the light of the Government's suggestions quoted above. Their chairman, in a letter to the Viceroy, dated February 6, 1928, proposed the method of "Joint Free Conference," that is, the seven British Commissioners sitting with corresponding representatives of the Indian Legislatures.

The Joint Conferences were not to begin till the second visit to India, and on the first visit, though numerous deputations were received, no evidence was taken. The Commissioners travelled about 7,000 miles during their preliminary visit, which was "mainly devoted to attempting to master the elements of the situation." Before they arrived on their second visit all the Provincial Legislatures except those of Burma and the Central Provinces had appointed committees to collaborate in "Joint Conference" as had been proposed. The Burma Legislative Council later—in December, 1928—appointed a committee, but no committee was appointed to represent the Central Provinces.

The Council of State had elected three members to serve on a committee representing the two Houses of the Central Legislature, but by a small majority the Legislative Assembly had decided not to cooperate with the Commission. Shortly before the second arrival of the Commissioners the Viceroy appointed an Indian Central Committee, consisting of the three members elected by the Council of State, with a fourth member of that body, and five members of the Legislative Assembly to work with the Commission.

In each Governor's Province—except the Central Provinces, where there was no Provincial Committee—all evidence was taken by the Joint Conference of the Statutory Commission, the Indian Central Committee, and the Provincial Committee sitting together. In the North-West Frontier Province evidence was taken by a Joint Conference of the Commission and the Indian Central Committee, assisted by four distinguished Indians resident in the Province. The Joint Conference at Delhi, where Central matters were under discussion, consisted of the Commission and the Indian Central Committee. In all the Commissioners travelled about 14,000 miles during their second visit. Shortly before the Commissioners left India a final conference, which lasted for three days, with the eight Provincial Committees, the Indian Central Committee, and the Statutory Commission sitting together, was held at Delhi. Further sittings of the Joint Conference were held in London between June 19 and July 30, 1929. For the purpose of these sittings the Indian Central Committee had come to London.

THE INDIAN STATES

Towards the close of the inquiry the Commissioners were increasingly impressed by the impossibility of considering the constitutional problems of British India without taking into account the relations between British India and the Indian States. Before proceeding with the task of formulating their conclusions they accordingly ascertained that his Majesty's Government would approve if they gave a "possibly extended interpretation" to their terms of reference by not excluding this aspect from their purview. This makes the description of the Indian States, which appears in Volume I., of particular importance, because it is manifest that the Commission contemplates some recommendations on this subject in Volume II. a fortnight hence.

The Commissioners also suggested—last October—that, because of the need of consulting the States, it would be desirable to set up, after the Reports of the Statutory Commission and the Indian Central Committee had been made, "some sort of conference, in which his Majesty's Government would meet" both representatives of British India and representatives of the States (not necessarily always together) for the purpose of seeking the greatest possible measure of agreement for the final proposals "to be submitted to Parliament." This suggestion, like the suggestion to include the States in the purview of the inquiry, was accepted. It was recently announced that the suggested Conference will meet in London on or about October 20.

THE GOAL OF BRITISH POLICY

The declared goal of British-Indian policy is discussed in the Introduction to Volume I. The Commissioners say:—

> Twelve years ago, in April, 1918, the Montagu-Chelmsford Report was signed. Its joint authors, in the first chapter of that document, declared that the announcement made by Mr. Montagu on August 20, 1917, to the House of Commons was "the most momentous utterance ever made in India's chequered history." This claim is justified. As the situation is reviewed after that interval it is manifest that this pronouncement supplies the governing conditions to be observed and satisfied by any and every scheme for India's future constitutional progress. Every circumstance was present which could add weight and authority to the declaration. Its terms were settled by a Coalition Cabinet—it is interesting to note that it was Lord Curzon's pen which inserted in the formula the reference to "responsible government" (Ronaldshay's Life of Curzon). The British Parliament accepted the statement as made not merely by the particular Administration then in office, but as a pledge and assurance offered to India by Britain herself. No challenge was issued by any Party in the State. After Mr. Montagu had returned from India with the Report drawn up by himself and the then Viceroy, indicating how the first step in implementing this declaration should be taken, the Government of India Bill of 1919 was introduced, and was passed by both Houses of Parliament without a division being challenged at any cardinal stage. The Joint Select Committee of both Houses appointed to consider the Bill (after it had been read a second time in the House of Commons by general consent) reported that the plan proposed by the Bill interpreted the pronouncement of August 20, 1917, with scrupulous accuracy. Among the changes which the Joint Committee recommended in the language of the Bill as first presented was an enlargement of the Preamble so as to reproduce as fully as possible the features of Mr. Montagu's declaration.
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> When the new Constitution was inaugurated, the Duke of Connaught, in the name of the King-Emperor, reaffirmed the policy of which the initial stage was then being taken, and successive Viceroys have reiterated the assurance. No responsible person has ever sought to repudiate the commitments thus entered into, and they have recently been reaffirmed and emphasized. We enter upon our task, therefore, upon the basis and assumption that the goal defined by Mr. Montagu represents the accepted policy to be pursued, and that the only proposals worthy to be considered are proposals conceived in the spirit of the announcement of August 20, 1917, and inspired with the honest purpose of giving to it its due effect. It is in this spirit and with this purpose that we frame our Report, and we can do no other, for we are appointed under a section of the very Act of Parliament which contains the Preamble.

THE DECLARATION OF 1917

The announcement made to the House of Commons on August 20, 1917, by Mr. Montagu was in the following terms:—

> The policy of his Majesty's Government, with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire. They have decided that substantial steps in this direction should be taken as soon as possible, and that it is of the highest importance as a preliminary to considering what these steps should be that there should be a free and informal exchange of opinion between those in authority at home and in India. His Majesty's Government have accordingly decided, with his Majesty's approval, that I should accept the Viceroy's invitation to proceed to India to discuss these matters with the Viceroy and the Government of India, to consider with the Viceroy the views of local Governments, and to receive with him the suggestions of representative bodies and others.
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> I would add that progress in this policy can only be achieved by successive stages. The British Government and the Government of India, on whom the responsibility lies for the welfare and advancement of the Indian peoples, must be judges of the time and measure of each advance, and they must be guided by the cooperation received from those upon whom new opportunities of service will thus be conferred and by the extent to which it is found that confidence can be reposed in their sense of responsibility.

THE PREAMBLE

The Preamble to the Government of India Act, 1919, recapitulated this statement as follows:—

> Whereas it is the declared policy of Parliament to provide for the increasing association of Indians in every branch of Indian administration, and for the gradual development of self-governing institutions, with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in British India as an integral part of the Empire:
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> And whereas progress in giving effect to this policy can only be achieved by successive stages, and it is expedient that substantial steps in this direction should now be taken:
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> And whereas the time and manner of each advance can be determined only by Parliament, upon whom responsibility lies for the welfare and advancement of the Indian peoples:
>
> And whereas the action of Parliament in such matters must be guided by the cooperation received from those on whom new opportunities of service will be conferred, and by the extent to which it is found that confidence can be reposed in their sense of responsibility:
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> And whereas concurrently with the gradual development of self-governing institutions in the Provinces of India it is expedient to give to those Provinces in provincial matters the largest measure of independence of the Government of India which is compatible with the due discharge by the latter of its own responsibilities.

THE GOAL AND THE METHOD

After mentioning that, in consequence of the passing of the Government of India Act, 1919, the Instrument of Instructions from the King-Emperor to the Governor-General of India was revised, two of the paragraphs in the Instrument making direct reference to the Preamble, the Commissioners say:—

> These, then, are the conditions, deliberately avowed and unswervingly maintained, under which Parliament is about to enter upon a re-examination of the vast Indian problem. These conditions have a double aspect, and as there is a tendency for some commentators to confine attention to the one point of view, while critics of a different school concentrate solely upon the other, we feel that it is of the highest importance at the outset to emphasize the fact that the Montagu declaration of 1917 and the Preamble of 1919 embody both.
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> On the one hand, "the progressive realization of responsible government in British India as an integral part of the British Empire" is the fixed object to the attainment of which, in cooperation with the Indian peoples themselves, British policy stands pledged; the obstacles in the way (and we shall not fail to give a full and candid account of them) cannot be treated as defeating that object, or as affording a discharge from its pursuit. They are of so formidable a character that no opinion as to what should now be done is worth anything at all until they are duly appreciated; but whatever the obstacles, the object stands as the declared goal of British-Indian policy.
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> On the other hand, it is equally part and parcel of the pronouncements of 1917 and 1919 that progress in the attainment of this avowed object "can only be achieved by successive stages"; that "the time and manner of each advance can be determined only by Parliament, upon whom responsibility lies for the welfare and advancement of the Indian peoples"; and that in the development of this purpose, the decision as to the immediate future must largely depend upon a just estimate of the results and consequences of the steps already taken.
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> We are well aware that many Indian publicists look askance at the efforts of others to give an account of these matters, however straightforward and sympathetic that account may be. The purely British composition of our own body roused resentment in many quarters in India—resentment which we did everything in our power to allay, first by seeking the cooperation of Indian Committees (for whose aid we are deeply grateful) and later by suggesting the calling of a Representative Conference after this Report and the Report of the Indian Central Committee have been made and published. We have learned enough of India to recognize and to respect the acutely sensitive pride of her sons. But we trust that in the pages that follow, inspired as they are by a desire not only to discharge our statutory duty to Parliament but to serve the cause of India's political progress, our Indian fellow-subjects will recognize that candour and friendship are close allies, and will find an earnest of that good will towards India as a whole which, we are well assured, will govern all the impending discussions. Our own task is not to decide, but to report to the King-Emperor, whose

Commission we hold and to the Parliament of which we are members. In the steps that will follow before the decision is reached there will be full opportunity for the contribution of the views of every section of responsible and representative opinion in India.

PART I.

CONDITIONS OF THE PROBLEM

In Part I., describing the "Conditions of the Problem," the Report says :—

In spite of the eagerness with which political India is embracing modern ideas of government, the ancient social system of Hinduism, which has evolved a rigid complication of innumerable castes, from the Brahmin at the top to the pariah at the bottom, continues to control the lives and thoughts of more than 200 out of the 320 millions of the population of India with a persistence and authority undreamed of in the Western world. . . .

A sense of unity is growing, but it is largely the outcome of the most recent stage of India's history, during which the influence and authority of British rule over the whole area have made it possible to speak of India as a single entity. This tends to obscure, to the casual Western observer, the variegated assemblage of races and creeds which make up the whole.

Two other influences making for unification are "the prevalence of English as the general means of communication among educated men in different parts of India," and "the growth of a passionate determination among the politically minded classes of all Indian races and religions to assert and uphold the claim of India as a whole to its due place in the world." The Report continues :—

It would be a profound error to allow geographical dimensions or statistics of population or complexities of religion and caste and language to belittle the significance of what is called the "Indian Nationalist movement." True it is that it directly affects the hopes of a very small fraction of the teeming peoples of India. True it may be that its leaders do not reflect the active sentiments of masses of men and women in India, who know next to nothing of politicians and are absorbed in pursuing the traditional course of their daily lives. But none the less, however limited in numbers as compared with the whole, the public men of India claim to be spokesmen for the whole, and in India the Nationalist movement has the essential characteristic of all such manifestations—it concentrates all the forces which are roused by the appeal to national dignity and national self-consciousness.

AREA AND POPULATION

Some instructive statistics of areas, population, and languages are given. The total area of India amounts to about 1,800,000 square miles—that is, more than 20 times the area of Great Britain. [At the end of the volume is a very clear map with Great Britain inset on the same scale.] Approximately 700,000 square miles—more than one-third of the whole—lie within the boundaries of the Indian States, which are not British territory at all, though they are under the suzerainty of the British Crown. These States are nearly 600 in number and vary in size from Kashmir or Hyderabad, the largest, with an area greater than England and Scotland, to properties of a few acres. The rest, which constitutes British India, is made up of nine "Governors' Provinces" together with certain other areas, of which the most important is the North-West Frontier Province. Burma, the largest of the Governors' Provinces, covers a greater area than the whole of France; and Assam, the smallest, is of the size of England.

At the census in 1921 British India had a population of 247,000,000, and the Indian States had a population of 71,900,000. British India, therefore, has nearly 2½ times the population of the United States. To immensity of area and of population must be added, says the Report, the complication of language. No single vernacular tongue has so wide a range as English, but the last census showed that only 2,500,000 persons (16 in every 1,000 males and two in every 1,000 females) were literate in English. The language with the widest currency among the general population is Hindustani, but it is far from being generally understood all over India. The census enumerates altogether 222 vernaculars for India, and the Report says that "a man who wished to make himself generally understood in all parts of India would have to be master of as many separate tongues as a linguist who was prepared to accomplish the same achievement throughout Europe."

THE PREDOMINANCE OF AGRICULTURE

The Commissioners lay emphasis on the predominantly rural character of the Indian population. They quote the statement of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report that, while "a country like England gives 58 persons out of every hundred to industry and only eight to agriculture, India gives out of every hundred 71 to agriculture or pasture. The Commissioners say that "any quickening of general political judgment, any widening of rural horizons beyond the traditional and engrossing interest of weather and water and crops and cattle, with the round of festivals and fairs and family ceremonies, and the dread of famine and flood—any such change from these immemorial preoccupations of the average Indian villager is bound to come very slowly indeed."

Holdings average about five acres in the south and east, but elsewhere not more than half of them exceed this limit. Most of the 500,000 villages have not yet been touched by metalled roads or railways; post offices are many miles apart, and telegraph offices still more distant from each other. Except in the north-west, the whole of the country is dependent on the monsoon, and all major agricultural operations are fixed and timed by this phenomenon. Under the prevailing system of tillage, the small holdings do not provide occupation for more than half the time of the cultivator. The urban population being relatively small, the demand for agricultural produce for final consumption in the towns is slight in comparison with the whole volume of production. Circumstances therefore have combined to maintain what is in large measure a self-sufficing type of agriculture.

The main characteristics of village life are still those of the centuries anterior to British rule. Each village tends to be self-contained ; in each will usually be found some persons with permanent title in the land, either as owners or tenants with hereditary occupancy rights. The vast majority of the peasants live in debt to the moneylender, who is often established in their midst. Included in the village population will be certain village officials, generally hereditary, such as the headman, the accountant, the watchman.

THREE CONSIDERATIONS

Three considerations have combined to limit any incentive upon the rural cultivator to add to his wealth by producing more than he requires for the immediate needs of himself and his family. In the first place, the tillers of the soil are pursuing traditional methods upon holdings inherited from their fathers before them and divided, as Hindu and customary law prescribed, in equal shares among sons or male agnates. For generations past the pursuits of the people have been predetermined by something in the nature of an occupational caste or guild system. Secondly, the lack of communications and of organized trade and commerce have been in the past, and still are to a most material degree, obstacles to a rise in the standard of life no less than to the wider political outlook of the Indian villager. A third reason for the backwardness of Indian agriculture in the past is that there were few periods in the recorded history of India anterior to the British administration when over large tracts the internal peace was not greatly disturbed and the demands of the State on the land were not heavy to an extent which made its possession a liability rather than an asset. Following close upon the establishment of internal security came that exhaustive and elaborate inquiry into and records of rights in land which forms the basis of rural prosperity.

Admirable work is being done by the agricultural departments of Government ; the carrying out of vast projects of irrigation has transformed many areas from the barest desert to fertile ground for cereals, or sugar, cotton or other crops ; the opening of the Suez Canal revolutionized the figures for the export of Indian agricultural products, roads have improved and extended, and railways have spread. The Commissioners observe :—

No fair-minded observer visiting the Indian countryside to-day can fail to be struck alike by the magnitude of the work to be done and by the zeal and exertion with which those, whether officials or Ministers, who have the work in hand, are tackling their stupendous task. But the fact remains, and must remain, that in a country so extensive as India, the effects of any single measure are apt to be so dispersed that they can be discerned with difficulty and that in spite of the progress that undoubtedly has been made and of the great increase in the gross wealth of the country, the ordinary cultivator on his tiny plot is still a man of few resources, with small means for meeting his limited needs—usually illiterate, though not on that account necessarily wanting in shrewdness—with an outlook confined by tradition and environment, and needing above all things that those who consider his future as a citizen should understand something of his life as a man.

URBAN CONDITIONS

In the whole of India there are only 33 towns which have a population of over 100,000. At the last census, of the 319,000,000 of people in India, less than 32,500,000 were counted in urban areas—that is, 10.2 per cent. of the whole, the corresponding figure for England being 79 per cent. In the great manufacturing cities most of the inhabitants are temporary residents, very largely males, who do not bring their families with them. The number of permanent residents of Calcutta (the population is over 1,000,000) who look upon the city as their home is probably not more than 25 per cent. The census found that there were more than twice as many males in the city as females ; in Bombay the disparity is almost equally striking. Enormous numbers who work in the industrial towns come from the countryside. Most of them are from the lowest rural stratum—landless men, like members of the depressed classes, or impoverished smallholders. Many of them will return for the season of planting or harvest.

The Report says that the Indian peasant who goes to some busy centre of activity to supplement his income often lives there under conditions which are almost unimaginable to the British working man. When the census of 1921 was taken, 70 per cent. of the tenements in Bombay were classified as consisting of only one room, and the average number of persons in this one-room tenement was ascertained to be 4.03. The census report declared that in Karachi the overcrowding was even worse than in Bombay, and the congestion in many other towns is almost as bad.

The conditions under which most of the industrial workers live tend to be much worse than the conditions under which they work. The immigrant to the city preserves his village standards of life ; conditions which may pass muster in rural areas cannot be observed in a crowded town without creating a slum.

HOUSING IN TOWNS

It is stated that there has been a material improvement in housing conditions in some industrial areas since the Census Report of 1921 was drawn up, and some particulars are given of the progress in Bombay and elsewhere. The Commissioners state, however, that when all has been said, there is a vast amount of work still to be done before the general standard of urban housing for working people in India can be regarded as reasonably good, and that the most difficult part of the task will be to instil into the minds of the slum-dwellers themselves the desire for something better.

The Report says it is inevitable that in India those who give their attention to political affairs should be found mainly in the towns. It is in the towns that are to be found the barristers and journalists who predominate among the leaders of Indian political opinion and from whose ranks for the most part are drawn the propagandists, candidates and public representatives of all political parties and communities. On this point the Commissioners say :—

The Indian educated class presents a feature which must be regarded as unique. For here is a body of men, educated, working, and, in many instances, thinking in an alien Western language, imbibing with that education the principles and traditions of a Western civilisation and polity, and yet keenly conscious of its unity with the mass of the Indian people whose minds are set in the immemorial traditions of the East.

Reference is also made to the great landlords, who form a nobility which both claims and exercises the privilege of high rank, and to the great merchant princes of India, and the Report continues :—

It was British capital that began the modern process of industrialism in India, but more and more commercial enterprise is falling into Indian hands. Most of the share capital in the jute mills on the Hooghly is Indian; the vast majority of the cotton factories of Bombay are Indian; and, while it was British enterprise which first established and developed the tea gardens of Assam and elsewhere, these undertakings are now carried on side by side with many that are Indian owned. India is now one of the eight most important industrial areas in the world, and the labour problems of Indian Government present the special complication that this industrialisation, which is of extremely modern growth, is displacing the village craftsman, so that large-scale manufacture is being superimposed on the ancient fabric of an elaborately subdivided and predominantly rural society.

RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

A chapter on the religious communities of India describes India as a land of almost infinite diversity in its religious aspect. Hinduism "is a religion which touches ordinary acts of daily life at nearly every point, and a philosophy of existence which provides an outlook fundamentally different from that of the creeds of the West." Dispersed among the 216,000,000 of Hindus of India are nearly 70,000,000 Mohamedans, representatives of a widely different type of culture spread throughout India as a consequence of a series of invasions from the North and West, which have taken place within historic times. The Commissioners point out :—

It would be an utter misapprehension to suppose that Hindu-Moslem antagonism is analogous to the separation between religious denominations in contemporary Europe. Differences of race, a different system of law, and the absence of inter-marriage constitute a far more effective barrier. It is a basic opposition manifesting itself at every turn in social custom and economic competition, as well as in mutual religious antipathy. To-day, in spite of much neighbourly kindness in ordinary affairs, and notwithstanding all the efforts made by men of good will in both communities to promote Hindu-Moslem concord, the rivalry and dissension between these two forces are one of the chief stumbling-blocks in the way of smoother and more rapid progress.

In British India the Hindu population amounts to 163,000,000 and the Mohamedans number approximately 39½ millions. In two of the Governors' Provinces (Bengal and Punjab) Mohamedans are in an actual majority ; in Bengal the Mohamedans number 25,210,000 out of the 47,000,000 which the Province contains ; in the Punjab there are 11,400,000 Mohamedans out of a total of just over 20,000,000. In the other seven provinces to which the Reforms have been applied they are everywhere in a minority. One of the difficulties in adjusting representation in the provincial Legislatures—unless for this purpose religious divisions are to be disregarded—is to devise a scheme which takes due account of Mohamedan predominance where it is found to occur and at the same time provides adequate representation where Moslems are in a minority. In the North-West Frontier Province there are over 2,000,000 Mohamedans out of a total of 2,250,000 in administered territory ; in the administered area of Baluchistan they number 367,000 out of 420,000.

In the Indian States the total Hindu population is 53,500,000, and the total Mohamedan population 9,250,000. Mohamedans are in a majority in Kashmir, though the ruling house is Hindu. On the other hand, Hyderabad, with a total population of 12,500,000, of which more than 10,500,000 are Hindus, has as its ruler the Nizam, who is a Mohamedan.

HINDU-MOSLEM TENSION

It is evident (says the Commission) that the distribution of the population as between Hindus and Mohamedans provides one of the most serious complications for Indian statesmanship, and that this question recurs in different forms and degrees in almost every part of India. The minority community is not concentrated in one part of the area, as Protestants in Ireland tend to be concentrated in Ulster. It is mainly represented in the North-Western parts of India and in Eastern Bengal, but its numbers elsewhere are not sufficiently small to be disregarded, and not sufficiently large to claim the mastery of numbers. . . . It unfortunately happens that on Indian soil the opposition of these two faiths is sharply intensified by religious practices which are only too likely to provoke mutual ill-feeling. The devout Hindu regards the cow as an object of great veneration, while the ceremonial sacrifice of cows or other animals is a feature of the annual Mohamedan festival known as the Baqr'Id. Hindu music played through the streets on the occasion of the procession of an idol, or in connexion with a marriage celebration, may take place at a time when the Mohamedans of the town are at worship in an adjoining mosque, and hence arises an outbreak of resentment which is apt to degenerate into a serious quarrel. The religious anniversaries observed by Moslems are fixed by reference to a lunar year which does not correspond with the adjusted Hindu calendar, and consequently it occasionally happens that dates of special importance in the two religions coincide—as, for instance, when an anniversary of Moslem mourning synchronizes with a day of Hindu rejoicing—and the authorities responsible for the maintenance of law and order are then faced with a time of special anxiety. In spite of the constant watchfulness of the police authorities, and of the earnest efforts of leaders in both communities to reach a *modus vivendi*, the immediate occasion of communal disorder is nearly always the religious issue. On the other hand, when communal feeling is roused on some matter of secular interest, religious zeal is always present to stimulate conflict, and partisans are not slow to exploit the opportunity.

VIOLENT OUTBREAKS

It is a lamentable fact that the occasions when Hindu-Mohamedan tension is carried to the point of violent outbreak have not diminished since the Reforms. In the five years 1923 to 1927 approximately 450 lives have been lost and 5,000 persons have been injured in communal riots; these figures include some disturbances in which Sikhs were involved.

The Report discusses the question whether Hindu-Mohamedan tension is aggravated or assuaged by the prevailing system of communal representation, under which Moslem voters form a separate electoral roll and choose their own members (as the Sikhs also do in the Punjab), while non-Mohamedan electors are grouped in distinct constituencies and elect their own representatives. It is pointed out that there is a long and important history connected with the separate representation of Mohamedans, and a special note on this aspect of the question is printed as an Appendix. The Commissioners say that in so far as Hindu-Mohamedan tension is due to the constitutional situation, it is not to be explained by dwelling upon the operation of electoral arrangements, but is a manifestation of the anxieties and ambitions aroused in both communities by the prospect of India's political future. The Commissioners add :—

The true cause, as it seems to us, is the struggle for political power and for the opportunities which political power confers. We are fully alive to the arguments against communal representation, but we cannot think that it is the effective cause of this deplorable friction. At the same time we are no less clearly convinced that separate communal electorates serve to perpetuate political divisions on purely communal lines, and we have every sympathy with those who look forward to the day when a growing sense of common citizenship and a general recognition of the rights of minorities will make such arrangements unnecessary. We shall return to this subject, and make our own observations upon it in our second volume. Here we are only concerned to call attention to the facts of a very serious situation, which every well-wisher of India should do his utmost to improve.

Among other religious communities discussed in the Report are the Indian Christians. This community has grown rapidly in the last half-century, and now claims to be the third largest religious body in India, numbering in British India and the Indian States combined about 4,500,000 souls, of whom 2,775,000 live directly under the British Raj. The Commission pays a tribute to the splendid service of the Christian missionaries.

CASTE

In a chapter on caste and the depressed classes, the Report states that every Hindu necessarily belongs to the caste of his parents and that in that caste he inevitably remains. No accumulation of wealth and no exercise of talents can alter his caste status, and marriage outside his caste is prohibited or severely discouraged. The Report says :—

Thousands of years ago the Brahmins established themselves in a position of ascendancy as the highest caste, with a monopoly of the priest's office and a claim to the monopoly of knowledge. Every priest is, therefore, a Brahmin, and his presence is necessary at the religious ceremonies of most caste Hindu families. But every Brahmin is not discharging the duties of a priest; on the contrary, the traditions of learning, the exercise of authority, and the intellectual energy of the Brahmin caste have secured for its members in some parts of India, though not in all, a share of power and influence—in the administrative services, at the Bar, on the Bench, and in the Legislatures—which is out of all proportion with their numbers. The ability of the Brahmin Pandit is everywhere acknowledged, and it is amazing to reflect how widely the seven or eight million men who are all that belong to the Brahmin caste, though everywhere in a small minority, are represented in the public life of India. At the same time many Brahmins follow humbler professions. In the United Provinces, for example, a large number of Brahmins are cooks, many of them in non-Brahmin homes.

In the census of 30 years ago, when for the first time a systematic classification was attempted, a list of no fewer than 2,300 different castes was drawn up. It is noteworthy that in the lowest stratum of all the process of sub-division persists; there are gradations of caste even among the outcasts.

The Report discusses the influences, social, economic and political, which are tending by degrees to sap the rigidity of the caste system.

The operations of large-scale industry (the Commissioners point out) bring together in a common enterprise men of different castes, and in the mills and mines of India many of them are working side by side in the same occupation. Trains and trams cannot make provision for caste distinctions. In the villages, cooperative societies have an important influence in breaking down ancient social barriers, and political, educational, and economic activities everywhere tend to bring into contact different grades. For practical purposes, therefore, it may be assumed that the strictness of caste feeling is being slowly modified in many directions, and the movement has the sympathy and support of not a few of India's progressive leaders. With the demand by the educated classes for a more democratic system of government we see the emergence of a new factor which has operated to modify the severity of caste distinctions. The problems of caste have for the first time in recent Indian history become a serious political issue. On the one hand, the existence of insurmountable social barriers has furnished the opponents of political reform in India with a powerful argument. On the other hand, there has been a growing recognition by Hindu politicians of the fact that social exclusiveness is a formidable obstacle to the growth of nationalism in the country. Mr. Gandhi in 1920-21 placed the removal of "untouchability" in the forefront of his programme. Some of his followers have gone even further and advocated the total abolition of the caste system. The passing of resolutions at public conferences is a very different thing from translating them into practice ; but many who view the prospect in India with sympathy and insight detect signs of a real change coming. . . . The spiritual and social subdivisions of India, operating in a land where there is a deep respect for religion, and supported by ancient tradition and the canons of orthodoxy, are not likely to suffer very sudden

violent alteration, and nothing is more clear than that whatever change may come, must come from the action of the people of India themselves.

THE DEPRESSED CLASSES

At the lower end of the complicated scale of castes, and definitely below all others, are found in every province of India, except Burma, very large numbers to whom in recent years the term "depressed classes" has been applied. These comprise some 20 per cent. of the total population of British India, or some 29 per cent. of the Hindu population. They constitute the lowest castes recognized as being within the Hindu religious and social system. Of these castes the Commissioners observe:—

"In origin these castes seem to be partly 'functional,' comprising those who followed occupations held to be unclean or degrading, such as scavenging or leather working, and partly 'tribal,' i.e., aboriginal tribes absorbed into the Hindu fold and transformed into an impure caste. Their essential characteristic is that, according to the tenets of orthodox Hinduism, they are, though within the Hindu system, 'untouchable'—that is to say, that for all other Hindus they cause pollution by touch and defile food or water.

"With few exceptions they are at the bottom of the economic scale and are generally quite uneducated. In the villages they are normally segregated in a separate quarter and not infrequently eat food which would not be touched by any other section of the community.

"The disabilities other than religious suffered by the untouchables vary in different parts of India. Two most widespread difficulties that arise are in connexion with water and schools. It is in many places customary for the untouchables to be denied access to the wells or tanks used by the other castes, and great difficulty has often been found when a new source of water supply has been provided from public funds by local authorities in arranging for the untouchables to have use of it. 'In many places the children of untouchables are either excluded altogether from ordinary schools, although provided in whole or in part from public funds, or else required to sit apart. We have been told of cases in which the untouchable child attends the lesson standing outside the school.'

"In Malabar is still found the phenomenon, now almost unknown elsewhere, of 'unapproachability,' that is, the untouchable must not approach within a certain distance of a high-caste Hindu, and would have to leave the road to allow his passage, and even to shout in order to give warning of the risk of pollution. 'It was stated to us,' the Commissioners remark, 'that a local authority in another part of Madras had preferred to leave the roads unmended rather than employ untouchable labourers to repair them.'

"Considerable efforts have been made in recent years by social reformers and by Government for the amelioration of the state of the depressed classes, but the Report states that progress has been and is likely to remain slow, and it adds:—

"Our own impression is that there is a slow but real improvement beginning in some areas. It is beyond doubt that there are those among the higher caste Hindus who have laboured zealously in the cause of the depressed classes, and not without effect; the missions have done splendid work in giving them a new dignity and a new hope; and we must mention with admiration the efforts which we are being made by the Salvation Army for some of the most degraded.

"The Report estimates the numbers of the depressed classes in the Governors' Provinces, excluding Burma, at 43,600,000, which represents approximately 28½ per cent. of the Hindu population and 19 per cent. of the total population. The estimate is subject to important qualifications owing to the fact that in some Provinces the connexion between theoretical untouchability and practical disability is less close than in others.

THE EUROPEAN IN INDIA

Europeans in India consist of men of business, who are found in the principal shipping and trading centres, British members of the Civil Service, and some 60,000 British troops. In the whole civil administration of British India, from the highest to the lowest grade, the European element is about 12,000 out of a total approaching 1,500,000, but the 12,000 includes a large number of British engine-drivers, a few British police sergeants, and other Europeans in subordinate posts. The total British element in the superior grades of the Civil Service is about 3,500. The services recruited by Provincial Governments are almost entirely manned by Indians. According to the 1921 census, the European population in British India numbered 156,637, of whom 45,000 were women.

Small as these numbers are, the Report continues, the part that is played by British enterprise in the commercial life and organization of India is incalculably great. . . . It is British organization and leadership which have promoted the modern industrial development of India, just as it has been the adoption of political conceptions derived from Britain which has chiefly affected the recent course of Indian politics. There can be few cases in history where so small a body of men has brought about changes so widespread and so fundamental.

THE WOMEN OF INDIA

The women of India and their social and political position form the subject of a chapter. The Commissioners observe that hardly any reference was made to the women of India in the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, and that it is a striking proof of the change which has come over the Indian scene in the last 12 years that no document discussing India's constitutional system, and the directions in which it can be developed and improved, could omit the women of India today.

All the legislative bodies except the Council of State have by resolution under the Electoral Rules extended the franchise to women on the same terms as men, but the qualification is such that the number of women who have become electors is extremely limited. In seven Provinces out of nine women may now also be members of the Legislatures and women from these Provinces can become members of the Legislative Assembly. In several of these Provincial Councils a woman member has in fact been nominated. In at least one constituency a woman has stood for election, and in municipal elections some women have been returned. Side by side with these developments there has begun a strong movement to urge social reforms which would promote the progress of Indian womanhood.

The excess of males over females in the population of India amounted at the last census to almost 9,000,000. "The gap is at its widest in the age-groups 10 to 20 and may be not unconnected with social customs and practices such as purdah and early marriage and unskilful midwifery which seriously affect the vitality of so many Indian women."

The Commissioners say that the feeling against purdah is fast gaining ground. It is a system which has pressed least hardly on the very rich who can afford to provide adequate separate space for the ladies of their household; medical reports show how terribly it eats into the vitality of less fortunate women who are shut up with small accommodation.

A still more significant symptom is the gathering force of the movement against child marriage. Something like half the girls of India are married before the completion of their fifteenth year; the last census showed that over 2,000,000 of them were married, and 100,000 were widows, before the age of 10. The Commission expresses the opinion that if the Sarda Act (penalizing marriage until the wife is 14 and the husband is 18) just passed by the Indian Legislature is adequately observed and enforced, one of its results will be a great impetus to girls' education. In 1921 less than one woman in 50 in British India could read and write. In no Province does one girl out of five attend school; in some Provinces not one out of 20 or 25. At present the numbers of trained Indian women in the professions of teaching and nursing are pathetically few, and the obstacles to increasing their number are great. The amount of unnecessary suffering caused to women by the lack of medical and nursing aid is "appalling." The Commissioners add:—

The women's movement in India holds the key of progress and the results it may achieve are incalculably great. It is not too much to say that India cannot reach the position to which it aspires in the world until its women play their due part as educated citizens.

THE PROVINCES

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERISTICS

The Report gives a description of the nine Provinces (Madras, Bombay, Bengal, United Provinces, Punjab, Bihar and Orissa, Central Provinces, Assam, and Burma), their principal physical, racial, and economic features.

The eight divisions which are defined in the Government of India Act as "Governors' Provinces," together with Burma, which was made a Governor's Province in 1923, comprise nearly the whole of British India. It is to these Provinces that the new system of government set up by that Act has been applied. The remaining territory consists of a number of minor Provinces directly under the control of the Central Government, of which the North-West Frontier Province is the most important. The three Provinces of Bengal, Madras, and Bombay (which were the first, and for many years the only, areas under British administration) are known as Presidencies; their Governors are by custom not members of the Indian Civil Service, as is the case in the other six Provinces, but are usually appointed from Britain.

The Commissioners visited each of the nine "Governors' Provinces," of the six minor Provinces they saw something of three (the North-West Frontier Province, Baluchistan, and Delhi Province), and one of their number visited a fourth (Coorg).

MADRAS

The Province of Madras is officially known as the Presidency of Fort St. George. The Report says:—

Hindus form the bulk of the population, but of the 37,500,000 returned in the census of Hindus, some 6,000,000 belong to the depressed classes. Mohamedans form less than 7 per cent. of the population. They include the important community of Mappillas (Moplahs) on the west coast, mainly consisting of descendants of Arab sailors and of converts from Hindu outcasts. The fanaticism of the Mappillas, often stimulated by agrarian discontent, has been a frequent source of disturbance to the peace and quiet of the west coast. Christians, thanks largely to the proselytizing activities of missionaries who began to come with the Portuguese and other trading settlers, are more numerous in Madras than in any other province of India, though they number less than 1,500,000.

BOMBAY

Apart from Sind, the boundaries of the Presidency of Bombay, with a population of under 20,000,000, were settled, almost on the present lines, in 1818 after the third Mahratta war. Its territories include Gujerat, the Mahratta country, and the Karnatak, each with its own prevailing tongue.

The Mahrattas (the Report says) are a warrior race. The Brahmins who live in the same country are distinguished both for their practical ability and for their love of learning. Neither Brahmin nor Mahratta has shown any marked aptitude for trade and industry. These two elements in combination attained, shortly before the establishment of British authority, a dominion over the greater part of India, reaching to Cape Comorin in the south and to the gates of Calcutta in the east. The States of Baroda, Gwalior, and Indore are among the territories which have to this day remained in Mahratta hands.

From the sea-faring races of the western coast, predominantly Mohamedan in origin, are recruited many of the lascars who man ships traversing Eastern waters. The trading races of Gujerat are known all over India, whether they are Bosahs, Khojas, Banias, Bhatttias, or Jains. The Parsis, whose homes are now predominantly in Bombay City, are another famous commercial community established in the same area. It is principally men of these races who have cooperated with the European to a degree unexampled elsewhere to make of Bombay a city of Indian wealth and culture. Indian finance and enterprise, centred in Bombay, are chiefly responsible not only for the three great hydro-electric works which supply power from the Western Ghats to the city, and for the majority of the textile mills of the Presidency, but for undertakings as far afield as the ironworks of Jamshedpur in the Province of Bihar and Orissa and the cotton factories of Nagpur in the Central Provinces. In projects of this magnitude the Parsis—who took early advantage of Western education and first became famous in industry as builders of teak ships—still predominate. Nowadays in Bombay Gujerathis compete with Europeans in banking, insurance, trade, and finance of all kinds. The rise to wealth of men of these races is, however, recent; possessions are in the hands of a few; and the relations between the industrial and the manual workers have been marked by constant and disastrous strikes. In no Province of India is there so large a proportion of urban dwellers as in the Presidency of Bombay. Bombay City, with its 1,200,000 inhabitants, is nearly as big as Calcutta and is the third city in the Empire.

SIND

Sind is completely separated from the Presidency proper by a wedge of non-British territory. It is thus described in the Report:—

The physical detachment of what has always been known, since its conquest by Napier in 1842, as the "Province of Sind" from the remainder of the Bombay Presidency is emphasized by the vastly different character of the country and its people. The "Presidency proper" receives the full brunt of the monsoon and is largely a land of mountain and forest. But for the Indus, Sind would be entirely desert. The Presidency, apart from Sind, is predominantly Hindu; before the British came its Mahratta fighting men were a bulwark against the Moslem invaders, whereas three-quarters of the inhabitants of Sind are Mohamedan. In its life and civilization Sind is more closely allied to Iraq or Arabia than to India. . . .

Sind is small in wealth and population. The rapid growth in the import and export trade of Karachi (the third maritime port of India, if Rangoon be excluded, and now the principal air port) does not greatly affect the prosperity of the Province as a whole. But great promise of growth is held out for the future. A capital sum of sixteen million pounds is being sunk in the "Sukkur Barrage and Canals Construction" now in course of completion on the Indus, at a point some four hundred miles from the sea. It is expected that the cultivated area of the province will be raised from two and a quarter million acres to nearly six million acres, and an assured water supply substituted for a scanty and precarious one.

BENGAL

Bengal is the political unit of British India which has experienced more changes of boundary than any other. The Report describes it as follows:—

Lord Curzon's proposal for the partition of Bengal by separating it from Eastern Bengal and creating a new province of Eastern Bengal and Assam, with Dacca as its capital, was put into operation in 1905, but the decision was reversed in 1911, when the Chief Commissionership of Assam was restored and the new Province of Bihar and Orissa carved out.

The present shape of the Presidency of Bengal is the result of these rearrangements. It is now the smallest in area of the Governors' Provinces except Assam, but has more inhabitants than any other Province, and the average density of its population of 46½ millions slightly exceeds that of Great Britain.

Racially and linguistically, no less than geographically, Bengal is more homogeneous than the other great areas of India. Though religious and cultural differences make it no less difficult in Bengal than elsewhere for Hindus and Mohamedans to unite socially or politically, it is generally held that only a small proportion of the Mohamedans of Bengal are descended from foreign Moslem invaders. Their ancestors were largely converts from Hinduism.

Roughly speaking, the Mohamedans are concentrated in the east and the Hindus in the west of the Presidency, but even in Eastern Bengal the town population is largely Hindu. Among the landlords Hindus predominate. The Mohamedans are markedly more backward educationally, and on the average are also economically below the standard of the Hindus, as is illustrated by the fact that though they form a clear majority of the population (54.6 per cent.) they are in a minority (45.1 per cent.) among the voters in the general constituencies. Eastern Bengal comprises the most fertile and also the most thickly populated districts. There are some rural areas with over a thousand inhabitants to the square mile. In central Bengal deltaic action is ceasing and the population has, on the whole, been stationary. Eastern and Central Bengal comprise the main jute-producing areas, not only of Bengal but of the world; for jute is practically a Bengal monopoly. The jute industry is less than 80 years old and its progress is most remarkable. The first mill was started in 1855 and the first power loom in 1859. By 1909 the out-turn was 2,500 tons a day, and it is now 4,000 tons. The value of exported jute manufactures has increased thirtyfold in 40 years. In the northern parts of Bengal, such as Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri, lie important tea districts; and in the west of the Burdwan division is a coal-producing area.

CALCUTTA

Of Calcutta the Commissioners say:—

The City of Calcutta, with a population, including its suburbs, of about 1,300,000, is in one sense an exotic, for it owes its origin as a great city to commercial enterprise in which the Bengalis have played little part. Even to-day the great jute mills on its outskirts are mainly controlled by Europeans, and the bulk of the Indian labour employed in them comes from outside the Province. The Bengali generally has not taken to factory or mill work; he leaves that almost entirely to the Oriya and up-country coolie or artisan. At the same time, Calcutta has become a great Hindu intellectual and political centre; with its newspapers and its enormous university, it exercises a profound influence over the views of the Province—an influence which naturally does not stop at its boundaries. The quick and receptive mind of the Bengali readily absorbs education of a Westernized type, and a problem of great perplexity is presented by those of the Hindu middle class (or more correctly Hindu *bhadralog*) who, often at great sacrifice, have been trained for clerical and professional careers in numbers enormously in excess of the amount of work of this type which is available. It is not surprising that many of them turn for an outlet to the political arena deeply imbued with hostility to the present régime.

AGRA AND OUDH

The number of great landholders in Agra and Oudh is specially noted in a section which says:—

The estates of these "Taluqdars" of Oudh number no more than 260, but they comprise two-thirds of the area of Oudh, and pay about one-sixth of the land revenue of the United Provinces. Some of the Taluqdars represent the old conquering Rajput families with an ancestry dating back to the ninth century. The most powerful of the Taluqdars own hundreds of villages and enjoy very large incomes. Their wealth, their social status, and the control they exercise over their tenants give these "Barons of Oudh" a position of very great influence in their area. They comprise members of both the major communities, and their common interests cut across the communal divisions.

The Zemindars of the Agra Province also form a landed aristocracy of special importance.

THE PUNJAB

The Punjab was the last of the Governors' Provinces of India proper to come under British control. Together with the North-West Frontier Province, which was not separated from it until Lord Curzon's decision of 1901, it has always borne the brunt of attacks made upon India through the defiles of the North-West.

In area the Punjab is a little larger than Great Britain, and its population at the census of 1921 was over 20,000,000. There are only two towns with a population of more than 100,000, Lahore and Amritsar. At least 90 per cent. of the total population lives in villages and 60 per cent. is supported by agriculture. It is a country of peasant proprietors.

The distribution of the population by religions is noteworthy because of its bearing on the communal question, which is acute in the Province. Of the total of 20½ millions, 11½ are Mohamedans, 6½ Hindus, and 2½ Sikhs. Throughout the western districts the Mohamedans are in a majority; indeed, in the border districts adjoining the predominantly Mohamedan area of the North-West Frontier Province, Mohamedans make up 80 per cent. of the population. The south-eastern area adjoining the United Provinces shows a Hindu majority of at least 60 per cent. The main Sikh concentration is in the Central Punjab. This was the centre of the Sikh power which held the Punjab before the British occupation in the middle of the last century. An important group of States under Sikh rulers adjoins the British territory of the province.

The problem of caste is happily of less importance in the Punjab than in some other Provinces. . . . The religions of the Mohamedans and the Sikhs, who together form two-thirds of the population, do not recognize caste, and within the Hindu community of the Punjab the pre-eminence of the higher castes is much less marked than elsewhere.

The sturdy and enterprising Punjabi has less aversion from emigration than the other Indian races, and he is to be found in many parts of the East as soldier or policeman or settler. The Punjab is at all times pre-eminently the military recruiting ground of India. The number of Punjabis joining the colours in the War was so great that one man in 28 was mobilized, and this single Province provided a third of the whole contribution of India to the forces of the Empire.

BIHAR AND ORISSA

The Province of Bihar and Orissa, which was constituted in 1912, is the "most artificial unit of all the Indian Provinces." It was formed by bringing under a single administration three areas which differ markedly, not only in physical features, but in many racial, linguistic, and cultural characteristics.

Reference is made to the large part of this Province which is "excluded" from the Reforms and to the backwardness of the inhabitants.

THE CENTRAL PROVINCES

The Central Provinces were constituted a separate Province under that name in 1861. From 1908 till 1920 they were governed by a Chief Commissioner, and in the latter year became a Governor's Province. In 1903 Berar, transferred by the Nizam to the British Government in perpetual lease, was added to the Chief Commissioner's charge.

ASSAM

In this chapter the Commission discusses the problem of the backward tracts and the treatment of aboriginals and others who have hardly emerged into civilization. The Commissioners were much impressed by what they saw in the backward tracts of Assam, where they visited some of the tribes. They say:—

No description can convey to the reader the striking impression produced by these gatherings, or the difficulty of fitting the needs and interests of such people into a constitutional scheme. These races must be among the most picturesque in the world, and until their energies are sapped by contact with civilization they remain among the most light-hearted and virile. To the economic self-sufficiency of the indigenous hill races—the Nagas, Kukis, Mishmis, and the rest—the tea-planter and the immigrant Bengali alike constitute a real danger. To the loss of self-respect, of confidence in their warlike prowess, of belief in their tribal gods, and of unfettered enjoyment in their patriarchal (or rather, in some tribes, matriarchal) customs—changes which tend to exterminate so many primitive races—there has now been added the curtailment of freedom to burn down the forest and sow seeds in its ashes. The process has already begun, and the best judges doubt how far the recent quiescence of the hill tribes—for the last expedition against them was in 1918—is due to contentment. If progress is to benefit, and not to destroy, these people, it must come about gradually, and the adjustment of their needs with the interests of the immigrant will provide a problem of great complexity and importance for many generations to come.

BURMA

The Commission has apparently been strongly impressed by the arguments for the separation of Burma from India. The Report emphasizes the difference between Burma and the rest of India, and describes the homogeneity of Burma as its most striking characteristic. Geographically, Burma is quite distinct from India, and is cut off from it by sea, mountain, and jungle. It is invariably reached from India by sea, Rangoon being 700 miles from Calcutta. Burma's members of the Indian Legislature have to travel over sea and land for nearly a week.

The people of Burma are entirely different from the peoples of India. They come from a different stock and have a different history. Their religion, languages, social system, manners and customs, and national dress are different, and they have a divergent outlook on life. No one who visits Burma after some experience of India can fail to be struck by the distinctive character not merely of Burmese habits, but of the whole Burman temperament. . . . The Burman, being a Buddhist, recognizes none of the social divisions of caste and custom erected by Brahminism. The women of Burma occupy a position of freedom and independence unrivalled in India. Again, the educational and economic conditions of the Burmese are

very uniform. The percentage of literacy according to the census of 1921 was 51 for men: Burma here owes its fortunate position principally to its monastic schools. The percentage of literacy among women is 11.2—more than five times the proportion for India as a whole.

THE INDIAN STATES

RELATIONS WITH BRITISH INDIA

The Indian States, according to the Report, constitute an outstanding feature which is without precedent or analogy elsewhere. Some of them are countries comparable in size and importance to a British province; others are much smaller; and at the far end of the scale are estates of a few acres owned or shared by petty chieftains and others who exercise no jurisdictional powers. Broadly speaking, however, the constitutional problem which arises in connexion with the Indian States is common to them all and must be sharply distinguished from relations which relate solely to British India. The future development of India cannot be envisaged without bearing fully in mind their existence and influence, and the Crown's obligations in regard to them.

Hyderabad is nearly as large as Great Britain and has nearly twice the number of inhabitants of Portugal or Austria. Kashmir State is of approximately equal size; Mysore has an area larger than the Irish Free State and has twice its population. The Report contains a special map which indicates those parts of India that are made up of the States. To the eye the largest continuous non-British area is that of Rajputana, but the Rajputana Agency consists of a number of separate States.

The total number of Indian States is 562 and they present a striking diversity of characteristics—geographical, economic, and political. They dovetail into the various provinces of British India. The main arteries of communication, essential to the welfare of India as a whole, constantly pass in and out of State territory. The Report explains:—

There is a very wide difference in the degree of administrative efficiency reached by the most advanced and the more backward States; the best of them are justly proud of the high standard attained. But for our present purpose, the essential point to bear in mind is a feature which is common to all Indian States alike. They are not British territory and their subjects are not British subjects. The relations between each of them and the Paramount Power may be ascertained or deduced from Treaty, or other written document, or usage and agreement; but however that may be, the Crown is, in each case, responsible for the State's external relations and for its territorial integrity.

Each State manages its own internal affairs by making and administering its own laws and imposing, collecting, and spending its own taxes. There is, as a rule, a British Resident or other Agent, whose duty it is to offer advice to the Ruler and to report to the British authorities; and there is the right of the Crown (which at present acts through the Governor-General in Council) to intervene as the Paramount Power in the internal affairs of the State in cases of gross misgovernment, or in cases where such intervention is called for, having regard to the duty of the Crown as Paramount Power to preserve the dynasty, to be answerable for the integrity of the State and to maintain peace in India.

RELATIONS WITH PARAMOUNT POWER

The Commission makes reference to the Butler Committee's recent investigation into the relationship between the Paramount Power and the Indian States, and quotes the Committee's "extremely important conclusion" regarding the demand of the States that without their own agreement the rights and obligations of the Paramount Power should not be assigned to persons who are not under its control—for instance, an Indian Government in British India responsible to an Indian Legislature. The Committee said:—

If any government in the nature of a dominion government should be constituted in British India, such a government would clearly be a new government resting on a new and written constitution. . . . We feel bound, however, to draw attention to the really grave apprehension of the Princes on this score, and to record our strong opinion that in view of the historical nature of the relationship between the Paramount Power and the Princes, the latter should not be transferred without their own agreement to a relationship with a new government in British India responsible to an Indian Legislature.

The Chamber of Princes constituted by Royal Proclamation contains 108 Rulers of States who are members in their own right and 12 additional members elected by the Rulers of 127 other States. The Chamber is a deliberative, consultative, and advisory, but not an executive, body, and it meets annually at New Delhi. The establishment of the Chamber of Princes has not affected the individual relations between any Indian State and the representative of the Crown. The Viceroy is himself in charge of the Political Department of the Government of India which deals with matters affecting the Indian States. The Chamber has enabled free interchange of views to take place on weighty matters concerning the relationship of the States with the Crown and concerning other points of contact with British India. The Commission says that the work of the Chamber during the last nine years, especially, perhaps, the work of its Standing Committee, proves that the time was ripe for advance.

But (the Commissioners add) this advance does not as yet cross the boundary which must be traversed before the first actual step on the road of All-India federation can be taken. We shall, in our second volume, discuss the development which may be hoped for in future relations with the Indian States, and we conclude this chapter by a quotation which postulates the necessary condition of further progress in this direction:—"I make no secret of my view," said Lord Irwin in June, 1929, "that in any proposals that may be made it is essential, on every ground of policy and equity, to carry the free assent of the Ruling Princes of India, and that any suggestion that the treaty rights which the Princes are accustomed to regard as sacrosanct can be lightly set aside is only calculated to postpone the solution that we seek."

THE ARMY IN INDIA

Much space is devoted to the important question of the Army. The Report states that in considering the implications of the policy, to the pursuit of which the British Parliament is solemnly pledged, for the increasing association of Indians in every branch of Indian administration, and for the development of responsible government in British India, no question is at once more difficult and more crucial than the future organization, recruitment, and control of the Army in India.

The Commissioners say:—

The Montagu-Chelmsford Report was written while the Great War was raging, and in the three paragraphs which it devoted, in a final chapter headed "Miscellaneous," to the subject of the Army, the principal matter dwelt upon concerned the way in which the services of the Indian Army in the various theatres of war had been and would be recognized. The authors mentioned the announcement of his Majesty's Government that the bar which had hitherto prevented the admission of Indians into the commissioned ranks of his Majesty's Army should be removed, and declared that this decision had established the principle that an Indian soldier could earn the King's commission by his military conduct. This apparently refers primarily to promotion from the ranks. The Report went on to say that other methods of appointment had not yet been decided upon, and emphasized "the necessity of grappling with the problem." An earlier paragraph took note of a general demand from Indian political leaders that extended opportunities of military service be afforded to the Indian people, but the passage continued: "It is impossible to deal with this large question in connexion with our present proposals. The War is not yet over. . . . The requirements of the future will very largely depend upon the form of peace which is attained. We therefore leave this question for consideration hereafter, but with the note that it must be faced and settled."

It was natural that the authors of the Report, writing in the crisis of the spring of 1918, after mentioning with admiration the services rendered to the common cause by Indian arms, and expressing satisfaction at the increased recognition which was being given to such services, should have contented themselves with noting the urgency and importance of the Army questions which would emerge after peace had been attained. But this does not alter the fact that the constitutional future envisaged for British India by Mr. Montagu's declaration of August 20, 1917, and the new scheme of government elaborated in the Report and embodied in the Act of 1919, inherently involved a tremendous question which is not, we think, formulated or indeed referred to in the Report, namely, what, in view of the resolve that British India should advance to the goal of self-government within the Empire, is the nature of the arrangements which must be contemplated and in due course reached for her external defence and her internal security?

We feel strongly that it would be a great disservice both to Britain and to India for this question now to be shirked, or for a method of treatment to be adopted which is confined to the search for temporary expedients wrapped up in soothing generalities, which only serve to foment suspicions of the *bona fides* of British policy on the one hand, and to divert attention from the ultimate and fundamental difficulties which Indian politicians themselves will have to face on the other. The best service we can render in this regard is to set out, plainly and fearlessly, for the consideration both of the British Parliament and of the political leaders of India the special features of India's military problem which must be provided for before Army administration can be a function of a self-governing India.

DEFENCE AND SECURITY

As regards external defence, India has to carry a constant burden of anxiety and provide against actual dangers on her north-west frontier which are wholly without parallel in the case of the self-governing Dominions. India throughout history has had to endure a series of incursions by foreign invaders, who have forced their way through the defiles in the north-west and at other points where a gap was found in the immense mountain barrier which cuts off India from the rest of Asia. It is the difficult and necessary role of the Army in India to guard against a repetition of these dangers. Sixty thousand British troops and 150,000 Indian (as well as 34,000 reservists) are organized into a Field Army, into covering troops, and into a garrison for internal security, with this task among others constantly in mind. In peace time the duty of the covering troops, assisted by frontier levies of various kinds, is to prevent the independent tribes on the Indian side of the Afghan frontier from raiding the peaceful inhabitants of the plains below. From 1850 to 1922 there have been 72 expeditions against these tribes—an average of one a year. The outstanding fact is that the urgency and extent of the problem of military defence in India are without parallel elsewhere in the Empire, and constitute a difficulty in developing self-government which never arose in any comparable degree in the case of the self-governing Dominions.

INTERNAL DISORDER

Internal security provides a second consideration which also makes the case of India unique. Troops are employed many times a year to prevent internal disorder and if necessary to quell it. The Commissioners remark:—

We have been told that this use of the Army for the purpose of maintaining or restoring internal order was increasing rather than diminishing, and that on these occasions the practically universal request was for British troops. The proportion of British to Indian troops allotted to this duty has in fact risen in the last quarter of a century. The reason of course is that the British soldier is a neutral, and is under no suspicion of favouring Hindus against Mohamedans, or Mohamedans against Hindus.

The vast majority of the disturbances which call for the intervention of the military have a communal or religious complexion. The Commission regards it as a striking fact that while, in the regular Army in India as a whole, British soldiers are in a minority of about 1 to 2½, in the troops earmarked for internal security the proportion is about eight British to seven Indian.

A third feature which distinguishes the case of India from that of any of the self-governing Dominions is that India presents to the observer an astonishing admixture, not only of competing religions and rival races, but of races of widely different military capacity.

The contrast between areas and races in India that take to soldiering, and those that do not (says the Report) has no counterpart in Europe. Whereas the most virile of the so-called martial races provide fine fighting material, other communities and areas in India do not furnish a single man for the regular Army. The Punjab supplies 54 per cent. of the total combatant troops in the Indian Army, and, if the 19,000 Gurkhas recruited from the Independent State of Nepal are excluded, the Punjab contingent amounts to 62 per cent. of the whole Indian Army.

A striking map is given showing the numbers of combatants in the Indian Army drawn from the various parts of India and from Nepal. The numbers are shown in the following table:—

Area	Numbers
N.W. Frontier Province	5,600
Kashmir	6,500
Punjab	86,000
Baluchistan	300
Nepal	19,000
United Provinces	16,500
Rajputana	7,000
Central India	200
Bombay	7,000
Central Provinces	100
Bihar and Orissa	300
Bengal	nil
Assam	nil
Burma	3,000
Hyderabad	700
Mysore	100
Madras	4,000
Miscellaneous	1,900
Total	158,200

The obvious fact that India is not in the ordinary and natural sense a single nation is nowhere made more plain than in considering the difference between the martial races of India and the rest, and it seems certain that in the future equal efficiency in the military sense cannot be expected from all sections of the population. The Report continues:—

As things are, the presence of British troops and the leadership of British officers secure that the fighting regiments of India, though representing only a portion of India's manhood, shall not be a menace to the millions who are conducting their civil occupations without any thought of the consequences which might ensue if British troops were withdrawn and the Indian Army consisted of nothing but representatives of the Indian fighting races. It is manifest that the peaceful unity of a self-governing India would be exposed to great risks if it relied, for the purpose of maintaining and restoring internal order, solely upon Indian troops drawn from selected areas and special races, such as the Punjabi, the Pathan, the Sikh, the Mahratta, or (to go outside India) the Gurkha.

The Commission discusses in detail some of the facts upon which Indian critics lay much stress in relation to Indianization of the Army. The point is made that it is essential to the honour of Britain, in relation to the assurances which have been given that this country is sincerely aiming at the attainment of self-government in India, that the transformation should be given every chance. The change is bound to be slow and it is much more likely to come about smoothly and successfully if the difficulties are honestly faced on both sides in a spirit of complete good will.

Constitutional progress in the matter of Indian defence (it is added) largely depends upon the coming generation of Indian officers, and every effort ought to be made to increase the number and improve the quality of candidates. . . . The objective which many Indian politicians naturally and properly put before themselves is to develop an Indian Army organized upon a purely Indian basis and officered by Indians. The pace at which this can be done does not depend upon any theoretical proposition that India's civil and military progress should advance side by side, but upon the practical efficiency of the new instrument for its essential purpose. So far as internal order is concerned, this is manifestly a primary task of the forces of a self-governing area, and the burden of providing it obviously and necessarily falls exclusively upon the Indian taxpayer. External defence, on the other hand, may be viewed in a double aspect; it may be regarded not solely as the concern of India (though India would be the first to suffer, if its frontiers were not adequately guarded), but as affecting the integrity of the whole Empire and as bound up with general Imperial policy. These are very grave and difficult questions which will require much consideration.

The Commissioners indicate that in the second volume of their Report they will return to the subject of the burden and organization of the defence services of India. They conclude their statement of the military problem in the present volume with what they describe as a double warning—

A warning on the one hand, that Britain cannot indefinitely treat the present military organization of India as sacrosanct and unalterable, but must make an active endeavour to search for such adjustments as might be possible; and a warning, on the other hand, that Indian statesmen can help to modify the existing arrangement in the direction of self-government only if they too will cooperate by facing the hard facts and by remembering that those who set them out for further consideration are not gloating over obstacles, but are offering the help of friends to Indian aspirations.

PART II.

EXISTING CONSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE

Part II. discusses the existing constitutional structure, 11 chapters being devoted to a description of the system of government which preceded the Reforms of 1919, the principles on which the Reforms were based, the provincial Legislatures, the Governor and the system of dyarchy in the provincial Executive; the backward tracts; the central machinery, consisting of the Governor-General, the Government of India, and the Indian Legislature; and finally the India Office.

It is explained that the pre-Reform structure had three cardinal points: (1) the concentration of authority at the centre; (2) the control over legislative functions exercised by the Executive; and (3) the ultimate responsibility of Parliament for the whole of Indian government. The Montagu-Chelmsford Report laid down four governing principles which were to be embodied in the new constitutional structure, these four forming being:—

(i) There should be, as far as possible, complete popular control in local bodies and the largest possible independence for them of outside control.

(ii) The Provinces are the domain in which the earlier steps towards the progressive realization of responsible government should be taken. Some measure of responsibility should be given at once, and our aim is to give complete responsibility as soon as conditions permit. This involves at once giving the Provinces the largest measure of independence, legislative, administrative, and financial, of the Government of India which is compatible with the due discharge by the latter of its own responsibilities.

(iii) The Government of India must remain wholly responsible to Parliament, and saving such responsibility, its authority in essential matters must remain indisputable, pending experience of the effect of the changes now to be introduced in the Provinces. In the meantime the Indian Legislative Council should be enlarged and made more representative, and its opportunities of influencing Government increased.

(iv) In proportion as the foregoing changes take effect, the control of Parliament and the Secretary of State over the Government of India and provincial Governments must be relaxed.

The recommendations of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report were not in all respects carried out by the Government of India Act, 1919, changes having been made in some material respects in accordance with the views of the Joint Select Committee of both Houses of Parliament. One important alteration was that the assent of the Legislative Assembly was made essential to the passage of all legislation, subject to the power of the Governor-General in cases of emergency to place a new law upon the Statute-book by mere certification with or without the assent of the Council of State and without any concurrence from the Legislative Assembly. A corresponding departure from the scheme of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report was made in the provincial sphere so that in cases where the ultimate responsibility rested with the Governor and his Executive Council the overriding of the Legislature should take place not through a system of grand committees, but without disguise by the direct method of certification. Another departure from the Montagu-Chelmsford Report is the provision that the Central Budget should be voted by the Legislature.

In most respects, however, the Montagu-Chelmsford Report was translated into law, and the formulas set out above are the framework to which the Constitution owes its shape. Accordingly, it is in the domain of the Provinces that the most substantial steps prescribed by the announcement of 1917 have been taken.

PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE

At least 70 per cent. of the members of a provincial Legislative Council must be elected members (except in Burma, where the percentage is 60) and not more than 20 per cent. may be official members; that is, persons in the whole-time civil or military service of the Crown. There are also nominated members appointed for the purpose of securing the representation of a class or community that would otherwise go unrepresented. The intention of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report was that the franchise for the Councils should be "broad," but it was only found possible to confer the franchise on about one-tenth of the adult male population. The normal qualification for the vote is residence within the constituency coupled with the payment of a small amount in land revenue, rent, or rates. All payers of income-tax and retired officers and men of the regular forces are also enfranchised. Even so, a large proportion of the voters are illiterate, and special devices are adopted to assist them to express their choice at the polls, such as pictorial symbols—a "tiger" or an "umbrella," for example—to indicate particular candidates, or the use of boxes of different colours to receive the ballot papers. The Report contains a specimen ballot paper which portrays the emblems used to distinguish the candidates.

Discussing the distribution of seats, the Report describes the question of separate communal electorates as the gravest and most difficult of all the problems that arise in connexion with the composition of Indian electoral assemblies. The Mohamedans have been conceded, under the Reforms, communal electorates so that they may vote for candidates of their own faith, and a similar arrangement for the Sikhs exists in the Punjab. The Commission says that this question of separate Mohamedan representation has to be closely studied in its historical aspects before a decision can be reached for the future. An account of the history of the matter is given in an Appendix. Evidently the subject of separate communal representation is going to be fully considered in Volume II.

DYARCHY

The novel distribution of executive powers in the Provinces which goes by the name of dyarchy is fully explained. All subjects which have been classed as provincial (as distinct from central) are subdivided into "transferred subjects" and "reserved subjects," and the former, though not the latter, are thereby removed from purely official administration and placed under Ministerial control. The object of this arrangement was to secure that a distinction should be drawn between the departments that were to be placed in the hands of Ministers responsible to an elected Legislature and the departments that were retained under the control of an executive that was independent of the Legislature's support. The government of a province is therefore committed in relation to reserved subjects to the Governor in Council (the members of which must not exceed four and are appointed by his Majesty), and in relation to transferred subjects to the Governor acting with

MAP
to illustrate the Report OF THE INDIAN STATUTORY COMMISSION

REFERENCE.
Indian States
Agencies & Tribal Areas... shown thus

Miles.
0 50 100 200 300

AFGHANISTAN
HINDU KUSH RANGE
Chitral
Gilgit
Karakoram Range
SINKIANG
KABUL
Jalalabad
Peshawar
Ghazni
KASHMIR
SRINAGAR
Leh
& JAMMU
Rawal Pindi
Kohat
Jhelum
Wana
Kundian
TIBET
R. Indus
Dera Ismail Khan
Sandeman
Thal
Bannu
Shahur Rd
Quetta
Pishin
Chaman
Hindubagh
Dera Ghazi Khan
Multan
LAHORE
Ferozepore
AMRITSAR
SIMLA
Umballa
Patiala
Bhatinda
Saharanpur
Rampur
Moradabad
Pilibhit
Bareilly
Meerut
Ghaziabad
DELHI
Hissar
Bahawalpur
Sukkur
Rohri
Bikaner
Ratnagarh
Jaisalmer
Indian Desert
BAHAWALPUR
KHAIRPUR
RAJPUTANA
Jodhpur
Ajmer
MERWARA
JAIPUR
AGRA
Aligarh
Sitapur
LUCKNOW
Gorakhpur
Darjeeling
Sikkim
BHUTAN
ASSAM
Hills
SHILLONG
Sylhet
Parbatipur
Darbhanga
PATNA
Bhagalpur
Gaya
Hazaribagh Rd
Murshidabad
Dacca
Jessore
Burdwan
Howrah
CALCUTTA
Chittagong
Midnapore
Sunderbans
Mouths of the Ganges
Balasore
Cuttack
Calcutta to Rangoon 787 m.
Hyderabad
KARACHI
Udaipur
Kotah
Bina
Katni
Jubbulpore
Ranchi
Bilaspur
Raipur
Bhopal
Kutlam
AHMEDABAD
INDORE
Itarsi
BARODA
Khandwa
Surat
Bhusaval
NAGPUR
PROVS
BERAR
Wardha
Chanda
Daman (Port.)
Nasik
Manmad
Igatpuri
Kalyan
Purna
Ahmednagar
BOMBAY
Poona
London 6760 miles
Dhond
Kurdwadi
Sholapur
Satara
Secunderabad
HYDERABAD
Warangal
Vizianagram
Vizagapatam
Kothapuram
Bijapur
Wadi Jn.
Bezwada
Guntur
Kolhapur
Raichur
Belgaum
Kistna R.
Kurnool
Masulipatam
Marmagao Harb (Port.)
Hubli Jn.
Guntakal Jn.
Giddalur
Bellary
Chitaldroog
Cuddapah
Nellore
Shimoga
Madras to Rangoon 1020 m.
MYSORE
Bangalore
MADRAS
Mangalore
COORG
MYSORE
Seringapatam
Pondicherry (Fr.)
Cuddalore
Salem
Mahe (Fr.)
Calicut
Cotacamund
Erode
Coimbatore
Trichinopoly
Tanjore
Palk Strait
Madura
Cochin
Jaffna
Elephant Pass
Tenkasi
Tuticorin
Quilon
TRAVANCORE
Trivandrum
Trincomalee
G. of Manar
CEYLON
Batticaloa
Kandy
Colombo
Galle
Hambantota
C. Comorin
Laccadive Islands
ARABIAN SEA
Malabar Coast
BAY OF BENGAL
Andaman Is.

TIBET
LHASA
Brahmaputra R.
Tsangpo or
NEPAL
MOUNTAINS
Mt. EVEREST
Mt. KANCHENJUNGA
Sadiya
Dibrugarh
Makum
Brahmaputra R.
Patkai Hills
Hukong Valley
Manipur R.
Kohima
Mogaung
Myitkyina
Imphal (Manipur)
Naba
Bhamo
Kanbalu
Lashio
Mogok
Thibaw
Monywa
Sagaing
Myingyan
MANDALAY
SHAN STATES
BURMA
Thazi
Salween R.
Minbu
Akyab
Pyinmana
Prome
Toungoo
Pegu
Bassein
RANGOON
Martaban
Moulmein
G. OF MARTABAN
Tavoy
Mergui
Andaman Is.
BAY OF BENGAL
BURMA
with part of
Assam & Bengal
To smaller Scale.
MILES
0 50 100 150 200

(1568)

Ministers. One of the most important and difficult questions which the actual working of the dyarchic system raises is the extent to which it has led to the adoption, as a constitutional principle, of the joint responsibility of Ministers. While the reformed constitution has extended responsibility to others, it has not, the Commission feels sure, lightened the burden which rests on the Governor's own shoulders, and the Report comments on the gravity of the Governor's task, especially in relation to matters which concern both halves of Government.

The method of treatment of the backward tracts of India, which contain a population of 13,000,000, varies according to the degree of backwardness. Certain areas have been wholly excluded from the Reforms, while in others the reserved half of the provincial Government is given full discretion in applying or refusing to apply new provincial enactments.

THE CENTRAL LEGISLATURE

The Central Legislature consists of the Governor-General and two Chambers—the Council of State and the Legislative Assembly. In each of the Chambers the majority of members are elected. The electorate for the Council of State has been so framed as to give the Upper House a character distinct from that of the Legislative Assembly and the franchise is extremely restricted. The Legislative Assembly consists of 145 members, 105 of whom are elected, while 26 are official members and 14 are nominated non-officials. The 26 officials include most of the members of the Governor-General's Council; the rest of the Council are members of the Council of State, but any Executive Councillor can speak in either Chamber. The franchise for the Legislative Assembly electorate has been arranged on the same lines as for the provincial Councils, but with somewhat higher electoral qualifications. Moslems have separate representation, by the creation of constituencies containing none but Mohamedan voters, in all provinces, except Burma.

There is no formal distribution of legislative power in the Indian Constitution between the Centre and the provinces, although for practical purposes a real distribution of legislative power exists. This distribution follows the distinction between central and provincial subjects contained in the schedule to the Devolution Rules. With the Governor-General rests the power of overriding control over Bills in the case of failure of either Chamber to pass essential legislation. The Governor-General may secure enactment by certifying that the Bill is essential for the safety, tranquility or interests of British India or any part thereof, and the power of certification has been used four times since the Reforms were put into force.

The Government of India, in its relation to the Legislature to which its members belong, differs altogether from the Governments of the provinces. No division of functions has been imposed on the Government of India, and none of its members is constitutionally "responsible" to the Central Legislature. No vote of that Legislature can bring about a change in its composition. In all essential matters the Government of India's own authority, save for its accountability to Parliament, remains indisputable. In constitutional theory the Government of India is a subordinate official Government under his Majesty's Government, though in actual practice this relation of agency is qualified by the extent to which (1) authority is left in the hands of the Government of India to be exercised without reference to or orders from the Secretary of State for India, and (2) influence is exerted by the Indian Legislature upon the acts and policies of the Central Executive. The Government of India administers the central subjects; it has the power of superintendence, direction and control over provincial Governments in respect of all "reserved" provincial subjects, and it is responsible for the administration of all subjects in areas of British India not included within the boundaries of the nine Governors' Provinces. The Governor-General himself—or Viceroy, as he is alternatively called—occupies "the most responsible, as it is the most picturesque and distinguished, office in the overseas service of the British Crown." Upon him rests a direct personal share in the main burden of government such as pertains to no other representative of the Sovereign within the Empire.

PART III.

WORKING OF THE REFORMED CONSTITUTION

Part III. of the Report deals with the practical working of the reformed constitution. It examines the working of the electoral system; the provincial constitution and the Centre; surveys central control over provincial matters; discusses the responsibilities of the Secretary of State and the Council of India, and reviews the course of politics since 1920 in the light of the Reforms.

It is pointed out that while it was desired that the franchise for the provincial Legislatures should be as broad as possible, practical considerations, such as administrative difficulties and the obstacles created by widespread illiteracy, have had the effect of limiting the number of voters. In the eight Governors' Provinces (excluding Burma), with a population of 227,238,000, the electors number 6,375,000, of whom 268,000 in six provinces are women. The proportion of electors to population in the eight provinces is 2.8. The adoption of property qualifications gave a predominance and sometimes a monopoly in the vote to certain classes in the population. Thus whole sections of the population came to be excluded from the franchise, chief among these being nearly all the women and the general body of the poor. Figures are given to illustrate the point that if education be the best test of capacity to use the vote the present franchise seems largely to fail to take advantage of the material available. A large proportion of the voters are illiterate—in some areas as high as 90 per cent.—yet the total number of registered electors is less than the total of adult male literates recorded in the census.

The Report brings out the astonishing size of constituencies for the provincial Legislatures. (The size of constituencies for the Central Legislature, dealt with later on, is larger still.) The basis adopted for rural areas was the District, and it is suggested that to English ideas the District may seem too large a unit for the purpose. The Commissioners take Essex as a typical English county and contrast it with the areas of the rural constituencies in India. Essex covers 1,530 square miles and is divided into 20 constituencies, the size of its largest county division being 377 square miles. In the Governors' Provinces of India, the non-Mohamedan rural constituency returning one member averages 2,500 square miles, while the Mohamedan rural constituency averages 4,700 square miles. Each of the two non-Mohamedan constituencies in Sind is nearly as large as the whole of Scotland, while the three Mohamedan constituencies in the Bombay Presidency proper are on an average larger still. At the elections of 1920, 1923, and 1926 the percentages of votes polled were respectively 29.0, 39.9, and 42.6, which the Report describes as remarkably uniform and showing a very steady improvement.

PARTY GROUPINGS

The result of the complex character of the Councils has been to produce Legislatures in which the formation of political parties, in the sense in which they are understood in Great Britain, has been almost impossible, and has indeed rarely been attempted. The various groupings, with kaleidoscopic changes of nomenclature, composition and leadership, have not often been on anything but communal lines, and their communal character has tended to become more, rather than less, pronounced. The Report says:—

> The only really well-organized and disciplined party with a definite programme (though, it is true, a negative one) is that of the Swarajists. Only in Bengal and the Central Provinces did they, even temporarily, achieve their initial object of making dyarchy unworkable, and in the provinces they have tended everywhere, in varying degrees, to be transformed into an opposition of a more constitutional kind, and have not infrequently played a useful part as keen and vigilant critics. With the detachment of most of their original Moslem members, they have grown more definitely into a communal party.

Of parties originating within the councils themselves, the Report mentions the Justice Party in Madras and the National Unionist Party in the Punjab.

After the first elections in Madras in 1920, the Ministers were chosen from the Justice Party, and for the first and last time in the history of dyarchy throughout India up to the present there was a Ministry both drawn from a single party and supported by an assured majority of elected members in the Legislature.

It became the universal practice for the officials in the Councils to vote with the Government whether the subject under discussion belonged to the reserved or transferred side. There is no province in which the official bloc has not at some time or other been of decisive value to Ministers, and in some provinces there has never at any time been a sufficiently large or cohesive Ministerial party to enable Ministers to ignore the assistance of their official supporters. These facts have had an important influence on the working of the dyarchic constitution.

DIFFICULTIES OF DYARCHY

The theory of the reformed constitution is that Ministers, without being answerable for the reserved departments or for policy associated with the reserved side, are jointly responsible to the elected Legislature in respect of the transferred half of Government. But it seems to the Commissioners that it has proved impossible to translate this theory into practice. They remark:—

> In the light of experience, it may be doubted whether the object aimed at could be attained as long as both halves of Government have to present themselves before the same Legislature. The practical difficulty in the way of achieving the objective of dyarchy and of obtaining a clear demarcation of responsibility arises not so much in the inner counsels of Government as in the eyes of the Legislature, the electorate, and the public.
>
> Provincial Legislatures were by the nature of the constitution set the difficult task of discharging two different functions at the same time. In one sphere, they were to exercise control over policy: in the other, while free to criticize and vote or withhold supply, they were to have no responsibility. The inherent difficulty of keeping this distinction in mind has been intensified by the circumstances under which the Councils have worked to such an extent that perhaps the most important feature of the working of dyarchy in the provincial Councils, when looked at from the constitutional aspect, is the marked tendency of the Councils to regard the Government as a whole, to think of Ministers as on a footing not very different from that of Executive Councillors, to forget the extent of opportunities of the Legislatures on the transferred side and to magnify their functions in the reserved field.
>
> Ministers have seldom altogether escaped the effect of the instinctive opposition which is aroused by their association with "Government," with the result that the ties between them and their supporters are weakened. There have also been reactions on the reserved side of Government. Decisions to be reached by the Governor in Council are affected by calculations of the probable attitude of Ministerial supporters. The stronger the following of Ministers, the greater their influence on the reserved side, and the theoretical distinctions involved in the idea of dyarchy are likely to be blurred in practice. Thus the two halves of Government have been thrown into each other's arms through their relations with the Legislature no less than by the impossibility of conducting the administration in compartments. This impulse towards a unification of Government has probably been all to the good from the point of view of the efficient conduct of business, "but the underlying and fundamental conception of the dyarchic system—complete 'responsibility' of Ministers in a certain defined field, and in that field only—has become almost hopelessly obscured."

LAW AND ORDER

The attitude of most of the Councils to law and order is described as critical. In most provinces the police administration has been the target of constant attack, sometimes of a general character, but often directed against specific individuals or the handling of particular incidents. Its defence has almost invariably been left solely to speakers on the Government bench.

The Commission regards it as a striking fact that the only instance in which a Governor has found it necessary to secure the passage of a provincial Bill by certification is the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act. On a few occasions a Governor has returned a Bill for further consideration with useful results, and there have been two or three instances of the use of the veto, but none of these occasions had any special constitutional significance. The powers of restoration of rejected demands for reserved subjects have been fairly frequently used with the notable exception of Bombay, where the Government has always found it possible to accept the reductions made by the Legislature. Frequently, though not extensive, use of restoration has been necessitated by the too common practice of rejecting a demand for a grant as a means of attacking Government in connexion with some particular branch of administration on the reserved side.

In some general comments on the working of dyarchy the Commissioners declare that it would be impossible to say that opposition to Government has always shown itself to be restrained or reasonable, but they are convinced that much of this irresponsible spirit is due to the effects of dyarchy which they have described. Moreover, members of Legislative Councils have been engaged in working a copy of Parliamentary institutions under conditions which often tend to reproduce the form rather than the substance of the original. If the Councils have sometimes shown themselves indifferent to the practical needs of administrative efficiency, they have also in many instances exerted a useful influence and thrown an informing light upon the proceedings of Government.

WORKING OF THE CENTRE

A description of the working of the Centre emphasizes the difficulties of applying the Western system of Parliamentary government to an area so vast and so diversified in its population as British India. Constituencies electing directly to the Indian Legislature cover areas and include populations to which European Legislatures are strangers. For example, Yorkshire, with an area of slightly over 6,000 square miles, is represented by 57 members of Parliament, and the rural area of the four counties of Lincoln, Norfolk, Suffolk, and Rutland amounts to just over 8,000 square miles and returns 23 members to Parliament. In the Indian Legislative Assembly of 105 elected members, 73 are returned by rural constituencies, and nowhere are the rural constituencies, returning a single member to the Assembly, less than 6,000 square miles in area. The three Mohamedan rural constituencies in the Madras Presidency, each returning a single member, cover 10,000, 48,000, and 83,000 square miles; that is, they are about half as large again as Wales, Scotland, and England respectively.

The inevitable result is a divorce of the representative from the life of the constituency. To sit in the Central Legislature, a Madras representative may have to face a railway journey of 60 hours to Delhi and of 78 hours to Simla. Members from Burma have to travel over sea and land for nearly a week. The 105 elected members are returned by about 1,150,000 voters scattered over a population of 240,000,000.

The Central Executive in India—the Governor in Council—is entirely independent of, and indeed can seldom count with confidence on, a majority in the Indian Legislature. No defeat can drive its members from office, and the statutory powers of the Governor-General or his Council are sufficient to prevent opposition from bringing administration to a standstill. The Opposition's opportunities for criticism and its powers of influencing the course of legislative and administrative business are extensive, but it cannot be vested with responsibility for the administration and thus be called on to reconcile its criticisms with the requirements of actual government.

In nothing is the contrast between Westminster and Delhi more striking than in the position assumed and the influence exercised by the occupant of the Chair of the Assembly (until lately Mr. V. J. Patel). He claims and employs powers of interference which would be quite contrary to the stricter limits of the Speakership. The Commissioners, who are all Members of one or other of the two British Houses of Parliament, say they are bound to make plain the difference lest it should be supposed that the traditions and the methods of the Speaker of the House of Commons were being reproduced in the Indian Legislature.

COMMUNAL GROUPS

There is nothing in the Indian Legislature which corresponds to the working of the party system as that expression is understood in Britain. Parties in the Lower House are predominantly communal groups. Up to 1928 199 Government legislative measures were passed by the Assembly, and only four (of which two were the annual Finance Bills) were rejected by the Assembly and subsequently certified. Five other measures were rejected or withdrawn but were not considered of sufficient importance to call for the exercise of the Governor-General's overriding powers. It was chiefly in the field of criminal law that the Assembly showed itself definitely antagonistic. In the Council of State, Government has been able to rely on support on all crucial questions.

The Report says that while the extent of Government legislation and the success in carrying it through without certification is noteworthy, the influence exercised by the Legislature on the Executive is not less remarkable. It has been directly exercised through putting questions to Government and the moving of resolutions, through the financial power which the Assembly possesses over votable items in the Budget, and through the working of standing committees. The indirect influence of the Assembly on the Government has been of still greater importance. "Its extent is hardly realized by the members themselves, who are inclined to lay stress on the theoretical irresponsibility of the Executive. In practice, as officials themselves have borne witness, the Government is greatly influenced by the contact of its members with the elected representatives."

NON-COOPERATION

The Commissioners end their survey of the working of the constitution by reviewing the course of Indian politics since 1920 in the light of the Reforms. This long chapter describes the political conditions in which the constitutional experiment was carried out and the trend of Indian opinion in relation to it.

The following extract from the Report describes the non-cooperation movement, which came into being before the elections of 1920:—

> The movement arose out of the racial bitterness and the political disappointment of the previous year, and the increasing anxiety of Mohamedans over the Turkish peace terms. An organized Moslem agitation—which became known as the Khilafat movement—was set on foot in India, with the object of bringing pressure to bear on the Imperial Government to restore the Sultan of Turkey to something like his pre-War position. Though the Government of India was not responsible for the policy of the Allied Powers, the movement was directed against the Indian Administration. Once more Mr. Gandhi came upon the scene. He placed himself in the forefront and brought with him his Hindu following. The whole of the opposition to the Administration—political, religious, and racial—thus became united and developed into the formidable agitation known as the Non-Cooperation Movement, of which he was to be the most prominent leader for the next two years.

MR. GANDHI'S OBJECTIVES

The aims of the rank and file of the Khilafat section of the movement were simple—they were concerned for the political and religious future of Islam. Mr. Gandhi's objectives were less definite. He stood for the ideals and the civilization of India as against those of Europe; for the cult of the spinning wheel and the simple economics of the village as against the factories, the railways, and the "materialism" of the West. But among his allies were many whose political and economic outlook and way of life were European. It is not surprising, therefore, that Mr. Gandhi never found it easy to define what "Swaraj" would mean in actual political practice; his accounts of it varied from time to time and were always nebulous. But the critical side of his doctrine was clear enough. Mr. Gandhi preached that British rule had impoverished India and destroyed its liberties. The existing Government and all it stood for were "Satanic," and the only cure was to end it.

As the movement was projected by Mr. Gandhi, the end was to be attained by bringing moral pressure to bear on Government. His adherents were to resign Government titles and honorary offices; to withdraw from Government service; to boycott schools, law courts, and the legislative bodies. Looming behind all these was the final measure of "non-cooperation"—refusal to pay Government dues, and organized mass disobedience to the laws and to the orders of the Administration. When the work of Government had been paralysed by these methods, nothing would be left for it but to abdicate. There was, however, to be no compulsion upon anyone to carry out any of these steps; and, above all, there was to be no violence to person or property.

Mr. Gandhi succeeded in the autumn of 1920 in securing the support of the [Indian National] Congress for his campaign—a matter of the greatest importance, since it placed at his disposal its organization and eventually its resources. With its help non-cooperation committees were set up in the villages, and Mr. Gandhi went up and down the country preaching opposition to the Government.

By the beginning of 1921 disorder had broken out in many Provinces. Open violence brought into relief the divergences between the religious and the militant tendencies of the Khilafat side of the movement and the political and non-violent principles of Mr. Gandhi and his more consistent disciples. The Hindu community became disturbed by the growing stress laid by their allies on religious aims, and in August, 1921, the Moplah outbreak showed that there was good ground for their apprehensions. Under the religious propaganda of the Khilafatists, and the growing belief that Government could no longer enforce its orders, the Moplahs rose in rebellion and, having destroyed the machinery of government in their area, and killed or driven off all the officials, they turned on the Hindu population in an outburst of murder, arson, and outrage.

THE FIRST LEGISLATURES (1920-23)

The elections to the new Legislatures were held at the beginning of the non-cooperation movement. The Nationalist Party had joined the movement and, consistently with its programme, its members did not stand as candidates. Every effort was made to throw contempt upon the elections, but the attempt failed. The field was left open to the Moderates, who were returned in preponderating numbers both to the Central Legislature and to the Provincial Councils. It is due to these first legislative bodies to recognize the public spirit with which they entered upon their duties.

The completion in 1923 of the three years' term of the Assembly marked the end of the first phase of post-Reform politics. The non-cooperation movement had demonstrated its dangers and had failed, and out of the Hindu-Moslem alliance upon which it rested there was shortly to emerge a Hindu-Moslem antagonism which has ever since been a dominating factor in Indian politics. The Legislature had taken an effective and honourable part in the working of the new constitution.

In the elections for the second Legislatures political interest lay in the appearance of members of Congress as candidates. A split had taken place in the ranks of the party. Certain of the leaders, conscious of the failure of non-cooperation, turned to a new method of embarrassing Government. They offered themselves as candidates for the Assembly and for the Provincial Councils on a pledge of "uniform, continuous and sustained obstruction with a view to making government through the Assembly and the Councils impossible."

For the policy of boycott was to be substituted one of wrecking the Legislatures from within. They formed a compact, disciplined and well-organized "Swarajist" Party, which had a striking success in the elections for the Assembly and secured 45 seats.

On the eve of the elections for the third Legislative Assembly (1927 and onwards) a fresh movement in the direction of constitutional methods appeared within Congress. The policy of entering the Legislatures in order to wreck them, and still more the policy of complete non-cooperation, did not commend themselves to an influential party. This group, led by Mr. Jayakar, Mr. Kelkar, and Dr. Moonjee, split off from the main body and formed the party of "Responsive Cooperation."

THE INDIAN PRESS

In the development of Indian politics and public opinion, which has taken place since 1920, the Indian Press has played a considerable part. The Report says:—

Judged by English standards, the circulations of all but a very few Indian newspapers, whether in English or in a vernacular, are quite small, but an important difference is to be noticed between what may be described as the "sale" circulations and the "effective" circulations of the two classes. The comparatively restricted knowledge of English practically limits the reading of newspapers printed in that language to the educated and student classes, but vernacular papers can be, and are, read to illiterate hearers by their literate fellows in towns, villages, railway carriages, public meetings, and so on. The "effective" circulation of many vernacular newspapers is, therefore, far greater than mere figures of sales suggest.

A broad view of the Indian-owned and edited Press, both in English and the vernaculars, since 1920, shows a continuously growing freedom of criticism of the Administration, more and more insistent demands for political reforms of a comprehensive character, and, in many newspapers, a freedom, indeed a violence, of language which, from time to time, brings within the scope of the criminal law the person put forward as Editor. The remarks made above in connexion with the "effective" circulation of vernacular newspapers make this development worthy of special notice. Another feature of the writing in the vernacular Press, which has assumed considerable prominence from time to time during the past few years, has been the volume and bitterness of inter-communal polemics.

Where there is practically no broadcasting, a comparative paucity of political organizations, and little opportunity of political education and guidance from other sources, assertions contained in a newspaper acquire greater power and prestige. When the Government is attacked, there is no one to defend it, and the most extravagant invention at its expense seems often to go unchallenged. It is difficult to convey how serious is the handicap to Government created by the absence of any effective exposition in the Indian-owned Press of the reasons for action taken and of the facts on which it is based. It is not merely that a particular policy may be misrepresented; even more grave is the undermining of respect for authority and good order in general.

PART IV.

ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM

The administrative system is discussed in Part IV., which contains chapters dealing with the organization and work of the administrative services, the districts and the secretaries, the Judiciary, local self-government, and the North-West Frontier Province and other special areas.

The Report points out that while in England the Civil Service is largely withdrawn from public view and works for the most part immediately under Ministers, in India Civil servants are distributed over the whole country and are engaged on duties of an extraordinary variety and technical difficulty. They will be found lecturing in universities, or bridging rivers, fighting epidemic disease, or dealing with widespread riots, excavating a prehistoric city, or installing a water supply for a new one. The great body of Government servants do their work in "the districts" far removed from the headquarters of Government, and in the public mind they carry an individual responsibility for the success or failure of the administration.

The services engaged on matters which are under the direct control of the Central Government are known as the "Central Services"; some of the officers of these services have been appointed by the Secretary of State, but the great majority of them are appointed and controlled by the Government of India. There are two main groups of services working under the Provincial Governments—the "All-India Services" and the "Provincial Services." The first are appointed by the Secretary of State and the latter by the Provincial Governments. Recruits to the Provincial services are, in general, graduates of Indian universities. An All-India service officer cannot be dismissed from his service by any other authority than the Secretary of State in Council, and he has a right of appeal to that body if he is adversely dealt with in important disciplinary matters. So far as recruitment for the services employed in the transferred field has gone, it points to rapid Indianization. The Lee Commission made recommendations in regard to Indianization of services which were still to be recruited by the Secretary of State. In the Department known as General Administration there are 630 Europeans out of a total of 5,500, excluding the lower classes of subordinates. The total number of members in the All-India services and the Central services of equivalent standing is about 5,250, of whom about 3,500 are Europeans. By adopting the higher rates of Indian recruitment introduced after the Lee Commission, the preponderance of Europeans in these higher ranks is constantly being reduced and will disappear. The Report describes the work of the Irrigation Department, Cooperative Department, the Police, the Medical Service, and Forest Administration by way of illustrating the wide range of the work of the public officials of India.

The Report brings out the very small proportion of British officials (3,500) to the total Civil Service of India. For example—in the police services as a whole there are 600 European officers, and nearly 800 European police sergeants, out of a total of approximately 187,000; in the civil medical departments there are 200 Europeans in a total of nearly 6,000 fully or partly qualified medical men; and in the education services there are 200 Europeans out of a total of about 1,500 officers in the higher grades.

THE PERSONAL TOUCH

The work of the public officials offers wide opportunities for service, and imposes great responsibilities towards the community. The Report says:—

There is one aspect of it upon which we have not dwelt. The Services grew up under a régime which permitted, and even fostered, initiative and resource to an extent unknown, and indeed impossible, in the Civil Service of a concentrated democracy like our own. The isolation of the individual official—the sudden call for personal decision—the special knowledge of local conditions possessed by the officer on the spot—the trust of the mass of the population in the person they know—all these have made civil administration in India depend on the man, rather than on the machine. And so long as the officer had the confidence of his chiefs, he was left a very wide discretion.

The success of the work of the higher services and the distinguished reputation they have always borne are in no small measure due to this freedom of action. The coming of the Reforms and the growth of a public opinion, or a Press opinion, which is highly critical, have necessarily involved more control from headquarters. But centralized direction of skilled officials, devoted to their work and trusted by their district, can go too far. The great mass of the people desire personal rule, and we believe that for many years to come there can be no adequate substitute for it. The tradition of India is that the man with a grievance and the man who decides how the grievance is dealt with should meet face to face. Personal rule does not mean the autocracy of the Services; but it does mean that, within the range set by its general policy, Government entrusts to its responsible officials in the districts a wide discretion, and supports them in the exercise of it against unreasonable criticism. It is only by the maintenance of such relations as these between Government and its servants that the best sort of administration can be provided for the wide areas of British India.

THE DISTRICT OFFICER

Apart from exceptional areas such as the Presidency towns, every inch of soil in British India forms part of a "District," and at the head of every district there is an officer (known in some provinces as the Collector, and in others as the Deputy Commissioner) who is, in the eyes of most of its inhabitants, "the Government." The system has some roots in the past. The district is always subdivided for administrative purposes. The establishment of dyarchy has not meant that District Officers are exclusively concerned with one side of provincial administration; in the ordinary case a District Officer has work to do both for members and for Ministers. As fast as old responsibilities are lessened new laws and new extensions of Government action place fresh duties upon the District Officer. Almost every piece of social or economic legislation, whether provincial or central, even if it does not call him in as the deciding authority, relies upon his assistance in some less defined way. His special authority arises from the combination in one person of the chief administrative and magisterial authority of the district.

The Commissioners say it is difficult to convey to an English reader how great is the prestige of the Collector of a district among the inhabitants whom he serves. To most of them he is the embodiment of Government. The authority which he derives from his statutory powers is augmented by the constant exercise of advice and direction in matters where he is expected to give a lead. He wields large powers of patronage; he is responsible for making a vast number of minor appointments—for instance, of village headmen and accountants, of revenue officials and office clerks. The preservation of this influence is of the utmost concern to the Administration. Many everyday matters which might involve merely tedious disputes, or even civil action, quickly reach conclusive settlement when brought before the Collector. The same influence becomes of manifest public advantage when more serious conflict threatens. It is not by his success in putting down communal riots that a Collector is judged so much as by his success in preventing their occurrence.

The conditions under which district administration is being carried on to-day (the Report continues) are still changing; the adjustments which the Reforms demanded are still going on; and the reorganization of the Services which the policy of the Lee Commission involves is still incomplete. But no changes or adjustments are likely to alter the central fact that the District Officer must remain a very important person, the embodiment of effective authority, and the resource to whom the countryside turns in time of difficulty or crisis. The respect in which he is held, and the influence which he wields, reflect the preference for personal and visible authority, which will endure though that authority is the spokesman and instrument of responsible government. In no future that we can foresee will the post of a District Officer cease to be one which calls for those qualities of integrity and decision which so many of the best kind of public servants have exhibited in the service of India.

LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT

As a consequence of the Reforms, and the transfer of local self-government to the control of Ministers, the Provincial Legislatures became responsible for the future destinies of local bodies. Almost all aimed at lowering the franchise, at increasing the elected element in local bodies to the extent of making it the unquestioned immediate arbiter of policy in local affairs, and at passing executive direction into non-official hands. The unit of local self-government in urban areas is the municipality, and the functions entrusted to municipal Councils in India resemble closely those exercised by similar bodies in Great Britain. In all provinces except Assam, the most important unit of self-government in rural areas is the district board, the jurisdiction of which is coterminous with the district. Almost everywhere the chairman is now an elected member. Within the area of the district board there are minor authorities varying in name, function and composition from province to province. The village Panchayat, or Union Board, is of special interest and importance as being an attempt to recreate the village as a unit of self-government. It has jurisdiction over a village or group of villages, and its primary function is to look after such matters as wells and sanitation. In spite of great efforts to establish these village authorities, it has not proved possible to progress very rapidly.

In considering the legislative and administrative measures taken by the various Provincial Governments to carry out the principles of the Reforms in the sphere of local self-government, the Commissioners say they were struck by a common failure to realize the magnitude of the change involved, which was little less than the introduction of a new system. It appears to them that the principles and practice of British local government were not fully apprehended in India. The keystone of the old system was the position of the District Officer as official chairman of the district or local board, and often of one or more municipalities as well. The principal administrative change made, in every province except the Punjab, was the substitution of an elected chairman in almost every district and municipality. This measure, designed to carry out the policy of enlarging the sphere of self-government by removing official control, in fact did more than this; it radically altered the constitution of the local bodies and their relationship with the Provincial Government.

Not a few of the failures and defects of local self-government in India may, according to the Report, be traced to the inability to realize the importance of having a competent and well-paid official analogous to the English Town Clerk or Clerk to the County Council. Another grave error was the failure to realize the need for control by the Provincial Governments over local self-government authorities. The result of the legislative and administrative action taken was, in effect, to deprive the new Ministers of Local Self-Government of powers which were essential if they were to perform their task successfully. On a review of the evidence before them the Commissioners are of the opinion that the transference of power from official hands has been followed, on the whole and as a general rule, by a fall in the previous level of efficiency. On the other hand, these publicly constituted bodies now show an interest in their work which gives more hope for the future than any mere adherence to standards of mechanical efficiency. There has been a very general and very marked growth in the interest taken in the extension of education and of medical facilities, though this interest may often have been misdirected and misapplied. The Report calls attention to such matters as the prevalence of embezzlement by employees, improper appointments and improper dismissals in not a few instances, and the existence of a number of cases of corruption.

THE NORTH-WEST FRONTIER

A chapter on the North-West Frontier Province and other special areas emphasizes the point that this frontier has long presented, and still presents, both an international and a local problem of enormous complexity and difficulty. Here in the deep and tortuous valleys are found bodies of hardy and fanatical tribesmen, well armed and fearless, unable to extract more than the barest pittance from the stony ground where they live and quarrel, but having before their eyes the tempting prospect of booty from the passing caravan or from a raid into the settled districts below them.

There is a large-scale map which shows clearly the relation between the unadministered tribal areas and the settled districts. The Commissioners say:—

The lower ground of the N.W.F.P. spreads out somewhat after the fashion of the palm and extended fingers of a right hand. In the palm, at the root of the first finger, is the capital, Peshawar; some 40 miles to the eastwards the great bridge at Attock carries railway and road over the Indus, which flows, as it were, across the wrist. The thumb, pointing north, leads to the Malakand and the Swat Valley, and so to Chitral; the index finger represents the road past the Jamrud Fort over the Khyber towards Kabul; the second finger leads *via* Kohat, to the Kurrum; the third, *via* Bannu, to Waziristan; and the fourth, further south through Tonk to the Gomal Pass. The interstices are occupied by wedges of inhospitable mountainous country, the home of frontier tribesmen, over whom watch and ward are kept at various outposts, and whose proceedings are further controlled by the making of such roads as the recently completed circular road *via* Razmak through Waziristan. The construction of similar roads, cutting through the wild country from point to point, has been approved in several other cases for which finance has not yet been found. The civilizing effect of such roads—for the frontier tribesman is learning to appreciate the motor omnibus—is only equalled by their value as a means of securing pacification in case of trouble.

The Commission's description brings out the real nature of the contrast between the government exercised in the five administered districts which constitute the North-West Frontier Province, and in the tribal tracts beyond. In the five districts, of course, there is an organised system of civilized justice, and if a crime is committed efforts are made to investigate it and to arrest, try, and punish the wrongdoer. There is a system of land assessment; a few of the more considerable towns are organized as municipalities, and, in short, the civil and judicial administration corresponds to that obtaining elsewhere in British India.

Contrast with this (the Report goes on) the administrative situation as soon as one crosses the invisible line (indeed, in some cases the actual position of the line is not precisely fixed) which divides the administered districts from the tribal tracts. In the tribal areas no organized magistracy exists, and there is no collection of revenue. The acceptance by the Pathan of control through a Political Agent essentially depends upon the fact that he is not called upon to pay any taxes. Beyond the *locus* of the military roads referred to below the tribesman does what is right in his own eyes, without being hampered by police sepoys, or the Code of Criminal Procedure. He lives inside his fortified farmstead with his womenkind, cultivates by primitive methods a limited strip of ground, maintains a constant state of feud with many of his neighbours, and knows that, if he shoots his enemy, neither the frontier authorities nor the British courts are likely to interfere.

On the other hand, the road is sacred. The road through the Khyber, for example, runs from Peshawar to the Afghan frontier, a distance of 34 miles, through the grimmest or bare mountains, but it is guarded on all necessary occasions by Khassadars, recruited from the tribesmen and paid by the Government of India a monthly wage. The Khassadar provides himself with his own rifle and ammunition, while the authorities supply him with a distinctive head-dress. You see him standing sentinel every 100 yards or so on some crag above the road, and he is the only sign of disciplined authority except an occasional fort or picket post on the tops of some of the hills. These Khassadars are units in a semi-military organization controlled by the Political Agent, and the result is that each section of the road is effectively guarded, not only for Statutory Commissioners on tour, but for caravans coming down with loaded camels from Samarkand and Bokhara to the great *serai* at Jamrud and to the Peshawar bazaar. Now that the railway has been carried through the pass as far as the frontier, the same system of tribal guards is applied to it—though the railway provides more opportunities for purloining portable pieces of equipment, and the prevention of such thefts is difficult.

A FIXED CONVENTION

A fixed convention has been established, and is insisted upon, that there must be no shooting or other violent crime committed on the road or within a narrow selvedge on either side. Crimes of murder and robbery do, however, occur from time to time in the neighbourhood of the road, and the authorities of the North-West Frontier Province are then entitled to take action.

Both in the administered districts and in the tribal tracts there is a system of traditional indigenous justice administered by tribunals called Jirgas. The system has its origin in tribal customs, and it is used under the authority of the Government of India both in the administered districts and, for the limited class of cases in which Political Agents intervene, in the area of the tribal tracts.

While the rest of India has step by step advanced along the road towards self-government, in the North-West Frontier Province there has been no change. The Commissioners say they will return to the difficult subject of the future constitution of this province in their second volume, and that they will endeavour to propose a mode of treatment which, while recognizing the special position of the area and its vital connexion with the defence of India, will make such provision as is possible for meeting the natural desire of some of its inhabitants to have a voice in framing the laws under which they live.

PART V

PUBLIC FINANCE

Part V. is entitled "The System of Public Finance." Finance enters so deeply and at so many points into the structure of Indian government that the Commissioners have found it necessary to describe the present situation, and how it has come about, in considerable detail. Six chapters are devoted to the subject.

Mr. W. T. Layton, editor of the *Economist*, acted as Financial Assessor to the Commission and accompanied it on the second visit to India. As the result of his "minute and patient investigation" he has provided a report upon which the proposals in regard to Finance to be made in Volume II. of the Commission's Report are largely based.

The more prominent factors which "at once influence and explain" the general financial system are set out. These are:—

(1) The predominantly rural character of the country, its isolated villages, and the dependence of the vast majority of its people upon agriculture;

(2) The low standard of living of the masses, and their poverty;

(3) The long tradition of centralized administration which has so profoundly affected the nature of its fiscal arrangements.

The Report also says:—

A further characteristic not to be overlooked . . . is the dependence of Indian agriculture on an uncertain rainfall, and the consequent danger of widespread famines, such as have periodically devastated huge areas of the countryside in past times.

An unfavourable monsoon affects the Budgets of the Provinces as well as that of the Central Government. To the former it means expenditure on famine relief works, suspensions and remissions of land revenue, and, in most cases, a reduction in the return from alcoholic excise. Central finances are not, perhaps, affected nowadays so directly, but any natural calamity which reduces purchasing power must tend to diminish the volume of imports, the profits of commerce and the receipts from transport, so that the revenue from Customs, income-tax, and railways (which are the principal sources of income of the Central Government) are also involved.

DEVOLUTION UNDER THE REFORMS

Having sketched the outlines of the earlier fiscal system, the Report explains the changes brought about by the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. The Commissioners state:—

The Montagu-Chelmsford Report is the most important landmark in the history of financial devolution in India. Its authors, after giving an account of the then existing financial system, based on quasi-permanent allocations and divided heads of revenue, pointed out how seriously such arrangements operated as an obstacle to provincial enfranchisement. Accordingly, when they came to describe the reformed constitution which they proposed for the provinces, the devolution to Provincial Governments on which they first insisted was financial devolution.

The idea underlying the new scheme was that an estimate should first be made of the scale of expenditure required for the upkeep and development of the services which clearly appertain to the central sphere; that resources with which to meet this expenditure should be secured to the Central Government; and that all other revenues should then be handed over to the Provincial Govern-

ments, which should henceforth be held wholly responsible for all provincial services.

This financial scheme met with much opposition, and a Committee, over which Lord Meston presided, was appointed, primarily to devise a scheme of provincial contributions, and also to advise on the claim of Bombay to a share of the proceeds of income-tax. The Commissioners say:—

The Meston Committee reported in March, 1920. It generally endorsed the conclusions of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, and advised against a division of income-tax proceeds, while recognizing that it would not be possible permanently to exclude Provincial Governments from some form of direct taxation upon the industrial and commercial earnings of the people. It recommended that general stamps be made provincial, for financial and administrative reasons. As regards the initial contributions, it found that there was general agreement as regards estimates of Provincial revenue, but that the estimates of normal expenditure were very strongly contested. The Committee, therefore, decided to follow the line of least resistance, and to assess the initial contributions on the "increased spending power" of each Province resulting from the new scheme of distribution—i.e., the additional income which each Province would acquire on the separation of the sources of revenue. The initial contributions were not, however, intended "in any manner to represent the ideal scale on which the Provinces should in equity be called upon to contribute." These initial contributions were to be reduced or increased over a period of seven years so as to conform to certain "standard proportions" based on the relative taxable capacity of the Provinces, their indirect contributions to the Central Government, the relative incidence of central taxes, and other economic factors.

THE MESTON SETTLEMENT

The proposals of the Meston Committee met with a very mixed reception. Some Provincial Governments were content with the contributions proposed for them, but certain Provinces—particularly Bombay, Bengal, and Madras—very strongly protested against the scheme, though the points of attack were not identical in each case. The Meston plan was embodied in draft rules to be made under the new Government of India Act, and in this form came before a Joint Select Committee of Parliament. The Committee accepted only the scheme of initial contributions. It considered that the ideal proportions suggested by the Meston Committee should be reached, not by a process of redistribution, but by a gradual reduction of the aggregate contribution. The aim should be the total extinction of these contributions and not a perpetuation of standard contributions. While definitely opposed to provincialization of the taxation of income, the Joint Select Committee recommended that, on grounds of policy, Provinces should be given some share in the increase of revenue from income-tax. Parliament adopted in substance the recommendations of the Joint Committee. Such, in brief, is the history of the scheme commonly known as the "Meston Settlement."

In the part of the Devolution Rules (made under the Act of 1919) which governs the present distribution of the sources of revenue between the Central and Provincial Governments, the more important sources of Provincial revenue are defined as follows:—

(1) Receipts accruing in respect of provincial subjects (which include irrigation, land revenue, forests, Excise on alcoholic liquors and narcotics, stamps, and minerals).

(2) A share in the growth of revenue derived from income-tax collected in the Provinces, so far as that growth is attributable to an increase in the amount of income assessed.

(3) The proceeds of any taxes which may be lawfully imposed for provincial purposes.

The new taxes which the Province may levy are not, however, specified in the Devolution Rules. The sources of revenue of the Central Government are not specified as such, but the subjects classified as Central include Customs, income-tax, salt, posts and telegraphs, railways, the cultivation of opium and its sale for export. The list of Central subjects also includes an item reserving to the Central Government all matters not included among provincial subjects.

The Devolution Rules (the Report explains) also provided for the payment to the Central Government of the contribution fixed by the Meston Committee. The contributions to be made by the Provinces to meet the central deficit varied widely in amount, from 348 lakhs of rupees in the case of Madras, 240 lakhs in the case of the United Provinces, and 175 lakhs in the case of the Punjab, to 63 lakhs from Bengal, 56 from Bombay, 22 from the Central Provinces, and 15 from Assam. Bihar and Orissa was to make no contribution at all. The proportions in which these contributions were to be reduced, in case the Central Government found it possible to do so, were specified in these Rules, which also contained a provision under which, with the previous sanction of the Secretary of State, the Government of India could in emergencies raise the contribution of any Province. Actually, no such emergency arose, and the contributions were gradually reduced and finally extinguished in 1927-28.

The Commissioners next describe the procedure regulating the allocation of revenues to the two halves of the Provincial Government and the functions assigned to the Provincial Finance Department in the dyarchical system. There had been much discussion during the gestation of the Reforms as to whether the revenue which a Province was to spend should form a single fund out of which authorized outlay should be drawn or whether, in view of the introduction of dyarchy, the transferred departments should have resources of their own, distinct from the resources available to the reserved departments. The alternative was described as a choice between the method of a "joint purse" and that of a "separate purse." The scheme ultimately adopted in the Act of 1919 authorizes the Governor to allocate a definite proportion of the revenue to the two sides, unless agreement could be reached between them without his exercising this power.

FINANCIAL STRINGENCY

In a chapter on fiscal developments since the Reforms the Commissioners point out:—

Along with the grant of financial autonomy and the assignment of independent sources of revenue to the Provinces, responsibility for the administration of all provincial services passed to the Provincial Governments. It had been hoped that the substantial initial surpluses which the Provinces were expected to get (according to the calculations on which the Meston scheme was based) would enable Ministers, when they took charge of transferred departments in 1920, to develop the "nation-building" services entrusted to them without the imposition of additional taxation, at any rate in the earlier years. . . . Circumstances over which neither the Government of India nor the Provincial Governments had any control rendered the realization of these hopes impossible. India, like every other country that had taken part in the War, was at the time of the introduction of the Reforms passing through an acute financial crisis.

The consequence was that in the first complete year under the Reforms, 1921-22, there was in every Province but one a serious deficit instead of the expected surplus. The Report continues:—

The history of financial administration during the first three years after the introduction of the Reforms is, therefore, largely that of the struggles of the Central and Provincial Governments to establish financial equilibrium by drastic economy and recourse to additional taxation. Court fees, stamp duties, registration fees, and the Excise duties on liquors were increased in almost all the Provinces, while at least three Provinces seriously contemplated the levy of succession duties. Special committees and officers in all the Provinces made detailed inquiries into the expenditure of all departments. Consequently, so far from there being any marked development of the "nation-building" services entrusted to Ministers, expenditure on the transferred departments at the end of 1923-24 was actually less than in the year 1921-22. It is not, therefore, surprising that in these years the financial arrangements, commonly, though not quite accurately, known as the Meston Settlement—and in particular the contributions to the Central Government—became the subject of bitter criticism by all the Provinces. It is also easy to see how this acute financial stringency had its reactions upon the political situation. The Majority Report of the Muddiman Committee (1924) declared that "the difficulty arising from finance has formed one of the main obstacles to the success of the Reforms."

The Muddiman Committee recommended a revision of the Meston Settlement as soon as a favourable opportunity occurred and expressed the hope that it would be possible to reduce the Provincial contributions at an early date. The financial embarrassments of the Central Government, however, were not at the time less serious than those of the Provinces. For three successive years before the introduction of the Reforms the accounts had revealed deficits aggregating over Rs.55 crores, while Army expenditure, instead of decreasing after the termination of the War, was rapidly increasing. Indeed, in 1921-22 it amounted to Rs.78 crores, which was a little more than the entire net revenue in that year of the Government of India, excluding the Provincial contributions. The first Budget of the Central Government under the reformed constitution included proposals for heavy additional taxation, mostly under Customs duties. It was hoped that these new taxes would give a small surplus, but actually, owing to the depression in trade and the failure of the monsoon, there was again a big deficit of Rs.28 crores. The additional taxation imposed in the following year included an increase in Customs duties, and in the duties on sugar, the rates of income-tax and supertax, in the general machinery, matches, and articles of luxury. There was still no promise of a balanced Budget, and under insistent pressure from the Legislative Assembly a Committee, presided over by Lord Inchcape, was appointed to scrutinize the expenditure of all the central departments. After an inquiry of more than two months the Committee recommended retrenchment to the extent of over Rs.19 crores in the expenditure of the Central Government. Military expenditure, which had already been reduced to Rs.65 crores in 1922-23, was cut down by over Rs.9 crores, and by the doubling of the salt duty financial equilibrium was at last restored. The financial position improved so rapidly in the following years that Sir Basil Blackett, who took charge of India's finances in 1923, was able not only to reduce the salt duty but also to abolish the Excise duty on cotton goods, which had been the subject of vehement attacks in India for nearly 30 years. And among the great financial reforms associated with his term of office was the gradual reduction and the final extinction in 1927-28 of the Provincial contributions. But while every Province gained relief by the ending of Provincial contributions to central funds, the relief was exceedingly unequal. The defects of the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme, which at first were screened by these contributions, have now been fully revealed.

THE FISCAL CONVENTION

When they come to deal with tariff policy the Commissioners repeat the following passage from the report of the Joint Select Committee on the 1919 Bill:—

Whatever be the right fiscal policy for India, for the needs of her consumers as well as for her manufacturers, it is quite clear that she should have the same liberty to consider her interests as Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and South Africa. In the opinion of the Committee, therefore, the Secretary of State should as far as possible avoid interference on this subject when the Government of India and its Legislature are in agreement and they think that his intervention, when it does take place, should be limited to safeguarding the international obligations of the Empire or any fiscal arrangements within the Empire to which his Majesty's Government is a party.

This recommendation was affirmed by the Home Government and now governs the relations between the Secretary of State for India and the Government of India.

THE FISCAL COMMISSION

One of the first results of the establishment of the fiscal convention was the appointment by the Government of India, on the suggestion of the non-official members of the Central Legislature, of a Committee "to examine with reference to all the interests concerned the tariff policy of the Government of India, including the question of the desirability of adopting the principle of Imperial Preference."

This body (the Report explains), usually described as the Fiscal Commission, consisted of four European business men and officials, Mr. Maynard Keynes, the well-known economist, and seven Indians. Mr. Keynes, was, however, unable to join the Commission and did not sign its report. The principal recommendation of the Commission was that the Government of India should definitely adopt a policy of protection to be applied with discrimination on certain lines indicated in the report. All claims for protection were to be examined by a Tariff Board, which was to consist of three members nominated by the Government, and which would also watch the operation of the tariff and advise the Government. In dealing with claims for protection, the Board was to satisfy itself that the industry possessed natural advantages, that it was not likely to develop without the help of protection and that it would eventually be able to face world-competition unprotected. On the question of Imperial Preference, the Commission recommended that no general system should be introduced but that the possibility of preferential duties on a limited number of commodities should be considered by the Indian Legislature after a preliminary examination by the Tariff Board. There was a minute of dissent by five of the Indian members, who, while not disagreeing with the main conclusions of the majority, emphasized the necessity for unqualified protection as the best policy in the industrial interests of the country.

THE TARIFF BOARD

The recommendations of the Fiscal Commission became the subject of a heated controversy between the various interests concerned, and the Legislative Assembly after a prolonged debate accepted the Government's resolution, which was in the nature of a compromise, that India's fiscal policy should be "legitimately directed towards fostering the development of her industries." A Tariff Board, consisting of two Indians with considerable experience in economic matters and a senior European official, was immediately established, and it has ever since dealt with claims for protection put forward by particular industries.

Since its constitution, in 1924, the Tariff Board has examined numerous applications for protection, and, while recommending a protective tariff or a bounty in the case of some industries, has refused similar assistance to others. The Government has invariably accepted the conclusions of the Board on questions of fact, though it has not in every case accepted its specific recommendations. On the other hand, the Legislative Assembly, though overwhelmingly protectionist in its outlook, has not rushed blindly to the application of protective duties and has on occasions shown "a determination that an industry claiming protection must prove its case." The general political atmosphere and influences emanating from the fiscal history of India in the past have hindered developments towards Imperial Preference, but it is to be noted that the Legislature accepted in 1927 the recommendation of the Tariff Board that British iron and steel manufactures should be given a preference, though the proposal was justified on the merits of the case, rather than on any considerations of Imperial Preference. Proposals have just been adopted (April, 1930) to increase the duties on imported cotton goods, while providing a certain preference for some branches of British manufacture.

PART VI.

GROWTH OF EDUCATION

"The Growth of Education" is the subject of Part VI. The work of conducting a special inquiry was delegated by the Commission to an Auxiliary Committee presided over by Sir Philip Hartog. The results of the Committee's investigations have already been published.

It is pointed out that the available statistical information as to literacy is entirely out of date, and that another two years must elapse before the Census figures of 1921 can be authoritatively revised. The figures of 1921 afford "somewhat dismal reading, and the depression is not relieved by a comparison with similar figures for some of the educationally more advanced Indian States, though, on the other hand, there are other Indian States quite at the bottom of the table."

The Report adds:—

The percentages of male and female literates for three States, which have made the greatest educational progress, are compared in the following table with the average figures for British India and for all India, including the States; while, for purposes of preserving a balanced view, some further figures drawn from other Indian States are added:—

	Literates per 100 males of 5 and over.	Literates per 100 females of 5 and over.
Travancore State	38.0	17.3
Cochin State ..	31.7	11.5
Baroda State ..	24.0	4.7
British India ..	14.4*	2.0
All India ..	13.9	2.1
Mysore State ..	14.3	2.2
Hyderabad State	5.7	0.8
Rajputana Agency	6.8	0.5
Kashmir State ..	4.6	0.3

*In 1911 the figure for British India was 12 per cent., and in 1881 8 per cent.

Excluding Burma, which in this, as in so much else, stands apart from other provinces of British India (male literates, 51 per cent.; females, 11.2 per cent.), Bengal has the highest percentage of male literates (18.1), while Bombay is at the top of the list in respect of women literates with 2.7 per cent.

These figures, it will be observed, are for literates of five years of age or over; it may be thought more material to consider the question of literacy among adults. We extract from the Census of 1921 the following further information:—Taking India as a whole, 17 out of every 100 men, and two out of every 100 women, who are 20 years of age and over, are entered as literate. In Bengal male literates within this range are 22.5 per cent.; in Madras, 21.4; in Bombay, 18.4; in the United Provinces, 8.9; in the Punjab, 9.7; in the Central Provinces, 10.4; in Bihar and Orissa, 12.6; in Assam, 15; and in Burma, 62.

So far as mere quantitative increase in the numbers under instruction is concerned, there has been a phenomenal advance since the inception of the Reforms, and the figures of expenditure on primary education show an equally remarkable increase since the Reforms.

The Commission says that the figures of attendance in primary classes in successive years, quoted in the Auxiliary Committee's review, rule out any sanguine conclusions from the purely quantitative expansion which has undoubtedly followed the Reforms. The fact that of 3,453,046 boys who entered Class 1 in schools in British India, in 1922-3 only 655,101 survived to reach Class 4 in 1925-6, and that the rest had fallen out by the way or had vegetated in lower classes without any prospect of attaining even initial literacy, is lamentably significant. In the case of girls the corresponding figures, which are 533,878 in Class 1 and 55,794 in Class 4, show an even more conspicuous waste of money and effort.

While the ignorance and indifference in matters of education which still, though to a diminishing degree, envelop the ordinary Indian household constitute the main obstacle to real progress, the Commission cannot resist the conclusion that the failure, even in existing circumstances, to achieve more substantial results is due mainly to ineffective control, direction, and administration. The supply of teachers and the organization need to be greatly improved; the reform of educational finance and a better concentration of educational effort are required to prevent expansion being unfruitful and the ground still uncultivated remaining sterile. Unless all resources are husbanded with the greatest care, the prospect of an educated India is remote, while the dangers which might arise from an uneducated India are not diminishing. The Commissioners add:—

We believe that the desire for education is widespread and that the material is excellent and readily responsive to good teaching. The missionary spirit of disinterested service in the field of education, which has long and honourably characterized Christian agencies, is showing itself in many other quarters and is no longer exotic. The educated women of India are doing their best to break down the barriers of custom and prejudice, which not only leave half the population uninstructed but through the reactions of female ignorance stand in the way of general educational progress. Enlightened opinion no longer tolerates or acquiesces in the abject condition of the depressed and backward classes. The beneficence of the wealthy is ready to be enlisted in the service of education; and the zeal of provincial Ministers in charge of this subject meets with ready support from their colleagues. In these features of the present situation there is much ground for hope and encouragement.

The Commission expresses the opinion that to achieve the ends in view, Governments will have to devote themselves for a long period to come to the task of reforming the organization and administration of this vital service.

PART VII.

PUBLIC OPINION IN INDIA

Part VII., the concluding part of the Commission's first volume, is an estimate of public opinion in India. Interest in politics in India, the Report states, is still necessarily confined to a small minority, chiefly found in the urban and educated population. All the world over the peasant, except in a few small countries, is not continuously interested in politics. But the small extent to which political consciousness has developed among the inhabitants of the 500,000 villages of British India is not caused solely by conditions which exist in rural communities all over the world. It is very largely due to special circumstances. The idea that the course of government should be affected or controlled by the opinion on political matters of himself and his fellows is wholly foreign to the traditions of the Indian "ryot." Communal and sectional feelings are nearest to the surface, and it is inevitable that they should take precedence over more general political conceptions. When the last Census was taken, 90 per cent. of the 320,000,000 who were then counted were found to be living in the same district in which they had been born, and of the balance, two out of three were found in a contiguous district. The growth of political consciousness is, therefore, hindered, not only by the tradition which so widely prevails that policy is a matter for Government, and not for citizens, to decide, but by the practical obstacles of distance and ignorance to be overcome, even after that tradition has been broken down. It must not be imagined from this that the Indian peasant cannot be stirred by mass movements inspired by ideas within the range of his everyday experience.

It is in the Presidency cities and in the other large towns that active political forces must be looked for, the Commissioners declare, and they add:—

The members of the professions, the journalists, most of the school teachers, and, above all, the lawyers, are naturally concentrated in the towns, and here, too, are the universities, the students of which make themselves so prominent in Indian political movements, apparently without any anxiety as to the consequence of absenting themselves from their academic studies.

Political thought in British India to-day is derived from Europe. The keen intelligence of the educated Indian has been stimulated by study of Western institutions. It is remarkable how the theories and phrases of political science as expounded in England and America have been adopted and absorbed. But the sudden impact of ideas drawn from the experience and conditions of other peoples in other climates is bound to have a disturbing effect. Down to 30 or 40 years ago India stood entirely outside the influence of the course of political ideas which at length produced democratic self-government in some other parts of the world. But in the last generation she has been swayed, at one and the same time, by the force of several conceptions which in Europe had followed a certain sequence. Thus, the struggle for power between rival religious communities, the rise of an intense national spirit, the spread of toleration, the growth of democracy, and the controversies of socialism, mark fairly well-defined epochs in European history. But in India these various influences are contending side by side for the allegiance of the politically minded. The growth of national self-consciousness is retarded by communal separatism. The movement towards Western industrialism is countered by the return to the spinning wheel. The equality of Asiatic and European is proclaimed, while the clash of Brahmin and non-Brahmin, or caste and outcast, is intensified. Ultra-democratic constitutions are propounded, although the long process which was a necessary antecedent to democracy in Europe—namely, the breaking down of class and communal and occupational barriers, has only just begun. Indian political thought finds it tempting to foreshorten history, and is unwilling to wait for the final stage of a prolonged evolution. It is impatient of the doctrine of gradualness.

The Commission declares that, with all its variations of expression and intensity, the political sentiment which is most widespread among all educated Indians is the expression of a demand for equality with Europeans and a resentment against any suspicion of differential treatment.

While the experienced Indian member of the Services will admit the benefits of the British Raj (the Report says) and realize the difficulties in the way of complete self-government; while the member of a minority community, putting the safety of his community first, will stipulate for safeguards; and while the moderate may look askance at extremist methods which he will not openly denounce; all alike are in sympathy with the demand for equal status with the European and proclaim their belief in self-determination for India.

The volume concludes with the following paragraph:—

The British people, so long accustomed to self-government, are bound to sympathize with this movement, even though they may deplore some of its manifestations. We are pledged to help India along her way, and constructive effort is needed. . . . In our view, the most formidable of the evils from which India is suffering have their roots in social and economic customs of long standing, which can only be remedied by the action of the Indian peoples themselves. They are much less likely to be remedied if the blame for their continuance can be put, however unreasonably, on others. We desire to see the forces of public opinion which exist in India concentrated and strengthened for the practical work of reform. It is only when the difficulties of constructive policy are really faced that the inadequacy of general phrases begins to be realized.

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